

Amelia Womack speech to autumn conference

10 October 2017

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack's speech to Autumn Conference in Harrogate.

*Check against delivery.

STARTS:

Conference. Thank you all for being here with me in Harrogate.

I want to start with a warning: this speech contains descriptions of domestic violence, abuse, and references to Donald Trump being president – which some people might find disturbing.

But seriously, it inspires me to see so many Greens together, building a shared vision for the future, asking the important questions, and looking to push the horizons of what we see as possible.

But as our time together draws to a close, I am concerned as well.

In this space, we stand united in the face of the injustice damaging our society.

We know we must bring about change. We know we can do this together.

But outside this hall, and across the world, the climate is very different.

In the US, Donald Trump ploughs ahead with a hateful and bigoted agenda.

In Germany, the far right surged on a tidal wave of Islamophobia.

In Catalonia, state repression is being used to crush a grassroots movement.

But conference, for every bigot, for every fascist, for every brutal riot cop there is a resistance. We are with that resistance.

We're with the activists in the states standing up to Trump's white supremacy and saying that Black Lives Matter.

We are with Greens in Germany saying yes to refugees.

And we are with Catalonian mums, dads, grandparents, kids, activists, and ordinary people – we're with them as they stand up to horrifying police violence.

Here at home, the Conservative Party has thrown cash at the anti-abortion and

climate change denying DUP to keep themselves in power.

We are being governed by a coalition of cruelty, propped up by a cabal of dinosaur MPs who between them got half of the votes that we did in the general election.

The government has become an unscripted farce, dominated by the egos of Boris Johnson, Rees Mogg, and David Davis.

So while we all watch Carry on up the Cabinet, our planet is heating up and Brexit threatens our future.

But conference, do you know what the Tories fear the most?

It's people like you.

People willing to take a stand.

Willing to speak truth to power.

Willing to dream the big dreams.

And willing to say loud and clear that there is an alternative.

Politics isn't something abstract. It isn't removed from our lives. It is our lives.

And today, I want to talk about an issue that has affected my life, and affects the lives of 4.3 million other women in the UK.

In England and Wales, an average of two women are killed by their partner or ex-partner every week.

Women killed by someone they loved, trusted or shared a home with.

The statistics for trans women are even more harrowing.

An estimated 80 per cent of trans people have experienced emotional, sexual, or physical abuse from a partner or ex-partner.

Earlier this year I spoke publicly for the first time about my experience of being in an abusive relationship.

It wasn't easy and it's still not easy to talk about.

But reclaiming that dark time in my life was empowering for me. And I want to empower other women who feel trapped by their experiences.

The response to me going public was overwhelming.

I received messages from friends, acquaintances, strangers. They all wanted to tell me that the same thing had happened to them, or worse – it's still happening to them.

But like me, they had never felt able to talk about it.

They felt voiceless.

They felt frightened.

And they felt alone.

It was a feeling I could identify with.

I had turned to the police – but they let me down.

I turned to my university – they let me down too.

It's not an unfamiliar story.

Every minute police in the UK receive a domestic assistance call. Yet only one in three domestic violence incidents are even reported to the police.

We are failing women.

We are failing all victims of domestic violence and we as a nation can and must do better.

Grassroots organisations and charities do amazing work to support survivors.

But their job is made harder when the government is running a brutal regime of austerity that punishes the most vulnerable.

Domestic violence services cut.

Refuges starved of funding.

Legal aid scrapped.

And they told us we were all in it together.

Let's face it: British politics is still predominantly male, pale, and stale.

Labour has never had a female leader. The Lib Dems have never had a female leader.

It fills me with pride when I look at the front-benches of the other parties and then think of our amazing women – Caroline Lucas and Caroline Russell, Jenny, Molly, Jean, Tina and Gina, Sian, Vix, Alison Teal and many more – who lead and represent our party.

But what of our female prime minister?

Let's make one thing clear. The Conservative party has let down women at every turn.

They cut midwife services, refuse to give public sector workers the pay rise they deserve, and lock up female asylum seekers who have gone on to be beaten

and raped.

Conference we can be, should be even, the party to finally deliver real equality for all genders.

But as a party we cannot be content with staying one step ahead.

I'm proud to help lead a party that champions gender equality for all.

We are setting the agenda.

We are calling for the cuts to domestic violence services to be reversed.

We are calling for a comprehensive strategy to tackle domestic violence at its core.

We are calling for an end to the detention of refugees.

And we are standing against not just the policies of austerity but its principles too, knowing that it affects women worst and BME, disabled and LGBTIQA+ women worst of all.

We are speaking truth to power.

Earlier this month I asked the Home Office for data on hate crimes in the UK and the gender of victims.

The response I got wasn't just disappointing, it was shocking.

The Home Office recognises five types of hate crime – transphobic, racist, homophobic, disability and religious.

But they do not record hate crimes according to gender. They couldn't give us the information we needed because they don't even record it.

To me, that's a powerful symbol of the way misogyny is treated in this country: sidelined, ignored, brushed under the carpet.

That's why today I'm announcing that the Green Party is calling for violence against women that is clearly motivated by their gender to be considered a hate crime.

From domestic abuse to rape, groping to stalking and harassment, we know that women suffer abuse because of their gender.

In order to eradicate a problem, you've first got to acknowledge it exists.

One police force has already started recording misogynistic hate crime.

In Nottingham, in the first two months after the change was announced, police investigated a case every three days.

Many of these are cases that would go unreported in other parts of the country. By showing that they take the issue of gender violence seriously,

Nottingham Police helped women to come forwards.

Now North Yorkshire police has joined them, announcing a similar crackdown on misogyny on International Women's Day earlier this year.

Sadly our government has shown no such leadership. The Home Office is failing in its duty to protect women.

My experience of domestic violence is behind me now, but it was a long and difficult path.

When I ran for election in 2014, I was terrified that it would give my ex partner the opportunity to make contact.

But looking back today, I can see now it was one of the steps I took to get my life back after being in an abusive relationship.

Politics has changed me and changed my life for the better. And I want it to help other women find their power in society too.

In May next year we will be contesting hundreds and hundreds of seats on councils across England.

From Knowsley to Norwich, Worcester to West Dorset.

We will be fighting to get Green voices into positions where they can be heard the loudest, challenging the Conservatives and holding Labour to account.

Today, I want to issue a challenge.

I don't want us to just contest more seats than ever before. I want more women to contest seats than ever before.

A woman's place is not in the home, it is in the house of commons, the council chambers and at the centre of our political struggles.

We've won the vote for women. But now we need to vote for women.

The number of women on councils in England and Wales is woeful. Only one in three councillors are women. Less than 1 in 5 council leaders are women.

We can do so much better than this.

We need thousands more women to be elected onto councils to close this appalling gender gap.

It's a big problem, but we'll be part of the solution.

Just imagine...

Imagine if Greens were making the decisions about our public transport, tackling air pollution on our high streets and protecting our green spaces.

Too many women have been failed by policies that exclude and marginalise them. Imagine these women taking power up and down the country.

We already have so many wonderful Green Party councillors, consistently making a difference and changing their communities for the better. But we need more.

Councils across England and Wales are failing their communities – no matter if they're run by Labour or Tories.

Lin Patterson, Green Party councillor for Bath and Somerset, stood up to her Tory-run council when they tried to sell off a 700 million pound NHS contract to a private company.

In Bristol, Green councillor Carla Denyer has consistently opposed the Labour administration's proposed cuts to council tax support, which would hit poorest residents the hardest.

In Sheffield, Green councillor Alison Teal has defied the Labour-run council she sits on to protest against a destructive and unnecessary tree-felling programme.

Lives changed and improved because of these Green women.

Let's not forget that the first elected position held by Caroline Lucas was on Oxfordshire County Council in 1993.

It's the first step she took towards becoming the formidable force in Westminster that she is today.

Today I want to announce my support for the next generation of Caroline Lucas – the women who will be standing as candidates in next year's local elections.

From now until May I will be campaigning up and down the country and I will be making a special effort to campaign with local parties that get a full slate of women candidates.

I'm also going to be setting up a mentoring scheme for young women standing for election for the first time.

Together, we can do this. We can lift the shadow of patriarchy from British politics.

One in four women have experienced domestic violence.

That means many in this room, many in politics, and many who are considering entering politics have suffered.

But they stay silent because society does not take misogynist violence seriously.

But our past does not have to determine our future. Our experiences cannot

silence our voices but should inform us about what needs to change.

With collective will and vision, historic barriers can be removed and new paths created.

Diversity should be celebrated.

And it's time to make politics look more like the people it claims to represent.

In parliament and in the town hall.

On every level. For every class, for every sexuality, for every ethnicity, for every gender and for every ability.

When I opened this conference on Saturday, I said the Green Party has democracy at its heart and we're proud to give everyone a voice.

It's members like you who make the decisions that become the bold policies we champion in the press, on the doorstep and in parliament.

Since Saturday, we've discussed, debated and decided policy.

We've caught up with old friends and met new ones.

And above all, we've reinforced the need for a dynamic, bold Green Party that challenges the status quo and pushes for a fair future for all.

We need Greens at all levels of politics, speaking truth to power, and building a better and more equal world.

As you leave this hall today, I ask you to think about your role in making that happen.

Would you make a great Green councillor?

Do you know someone who would?

Can you get more Green voices front and centre?

Can you go canvassing, or run a campaign in your community?

As we face more political turmoil in an increasingly insecure world, it's never been more important to stand united, campaign for progress and get more Greens elected.

Between now and May next year we have the opportunity to campaign, debate, persuade, and influence, more than ever before.

Let's make 2018 a year of progress, a year for women and yes, a year for Greens.

Thank you.

ENDS.

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Greens call for violence against women motivated by their gender to be a hate crime



10 October 2017

***Home Office does not break down hate crimes by gender**

***Greens call for misogyny to be classified as a hate crime**

***Deputy leader shares her experience of domestic violence in speech to conference**

The Green Party has called for violence against women that is clearly motivated by their gender to be a hate crime after revelations the Home Office does not break down hate crimes by gender of victims [1].

Amelia Womack, Green Party deputy leader, announced the policy in a speech to the party's autumn conference today [2].

Womack also spoke about her own experience of domestic violence [3].

Womack said:

“The Home Office does not record hate crimes according to gender and to me that’s a powerful symbol of the way misogyny is treated in this country: sidelined, ignored, brushed under the carpet.

“That’s why today I’m announcing that the Green Party is calling for violence against women that is clearly motivated by their gender to be considered a hate crime. From domestic abuse to rape, groping to stalking and harassment, we know that women suffer abuse because of their gender.

“Earlier this year I spoke publicly for the first time about my experience of being in an abusive relationship. It wasn’t easy and it’s still not easy to talk about, but reclaiming that dark time in my life was empowering for me. And I want to empower other women who feel trapped by their experiences.

"The response to me going public was overwhelming – I received messages from friends, acquaintances and strangers. They all wanted to tell me that the same thing had happened to them, or worse – it's still happening to them. But like me, they had never felt able to talk about it.

"Grassroots organisations and charities do amazing work to support survivors but their job is made harder when the government is running a brutal regime of austerity that punishes the most vulnerable. I'm proud to help lead a party that champions gender equality for all. We are calling for the cuts to domestic violence services to be reversed and a comprehensive strategy to tackle domestic violence at its core."

Notes:

1. The Green Party submitted an FOI request to the Home Office asking for data on each of the five strands of hate crime (race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender) broken down by victims identifying as men, women and other. The response, received on October 3, stated: The Home office does not hold the information requested. The Home Office does not collect data on the sex of all victims of hate crime victims for England and Wales.
2. Amelia Womack addressed Green Party Autumn Conference at 2.30pm on October 10 at the Harrogate International Centre, Entrance 3, King's Rd, Harrogate HG1 5LA.
3. <http://www.stylist.co.uk/people/amelia-womack-green-party-manifesto-domestic-violence-abuse-interview>
4. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/green-party-womens-manifesto.pdf>
5. For the full speech visit: <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/>

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Greens call for record number of women to stand for council seats



10 October 2017

***Only a third of councillors in England are women**

***Conference to close with challenge to Green Party members**

***Deputy leader Amelia Womack: "We will be fighting to get Green voices into**

positions where they can be heard the loudest, challenging the Conservatives and holding Labour to account”

The Green Party will announce new initiatives to ensure more women stand for council seats in the May 2018 local elections.

Deputy leader Amelia Womack will close the party’s autumn conference today [1] with a rallying cry for a record number of women to stand as Green Party candidates next year.

The call follows research published in August showing 12,000 more women councillors are needed to close the gender gap on councils in England [2]. Only 33 per cent of councillors and 17 per cent of council leaders are women.

Womack will pledge to visit and campaign with all-female fields of candidates and mentor young women standing for election for the first time.

Womack is expected to say:

“Politics has changed me and changed my life for the better, and I want it to help other women find their power in society too. In May next year we will be contesting hundreds and hundreds of seats on councils across England, from Knowsley to Norwich and Worcester to West Dorset. We will be fighting to get Green voices into positions where they can be heard the loudest, challenging the Conservatives and holding Labour to account.

“Today I want to issue a challenge. I don’t want us to just contest more seats than ever before, I want more women to contest those seats than ever before. England needs 12,000 more women to be elected onto councils to close this appalling gender gap.

“We’ve won the vote for women, but now we need to vote for women. We can do so much better than this.”

Notes:

1. Amelia Womack will address Green Party Autumn Conference at 2.30pm on October 10 at the Harrogate International Centre, Entrance 3, King’s Rd, Harrogate HG1 5LA.
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/aug/20/councils-women-inequality-local-politics-quotas>

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Jonathan Bartley speech to Autumn Conference: Speaking truth to power

9 October 2017

Jonathan Bartley speech to Autumn Conference in Harrogate.

*Check against delivery.

STARTS:

Caroline. It is an honour to share a stage with you – let alone a job!

Thank you on behalf of everyone here.

Thank you for bravely speaking the truth to those in power. And thank you for being OUR thorn in THEIR side.

Conference, I'm completely prepared for this speech.

I've got some Soothers.

I've got some Blue Tack, just in case any bits of the stage start falling off

And – most importantly – I've actually brought a vision for the future of this country.

It's great to be back in Harrogate. And Yorkshire for the second time in a week.

Last Tuesday I was in Kirby Misperton with those on the frontline of the battle against fracking. On Monday I was in Lancashire at Preston New Road.

It is truly inspirational to see this insurgency grow. Councillors and campaigners like Gina Dowding and Tina Rothery.

Communities taking action for a better future. The REAL Northern powerhouse.

And friends our commitment to the future is one of the reasons I am proud to be co-leader of our party.

A party that's truly different.

A party that isn't afraid to cause the right kind of trouble.

A party that sees climate breakdown and is willing to put our bodies on the line to stop it.

As Caroline said it's a year since we became co-leaders. And what a year it's been!

In May's local elections we were the only party outside Government to make gains.

And recent by-elections in Lewes and Cannock Chase have added two more to our number.

Johnny Denis and Stuart Crabtree. Give them a round of applause.

Next year I will be standing for election to my local council, like many of you in this room today.

Joining the Green opposition to social cleansing and reckless financial mismanagement in Lambeth. Standing up against the demolition of estates. Telling a Labour council at odds with its own party's leader that its toxic policies aren't welcome in my borough.

Our ambition is a strong green voice of truth in every community. Shaping the future by what we do today.

Like Sian Berry standing with survivors of Grenfell, who were ignored by successive Governments before the fire – and abandoned by this Government after.

Or the award winning Caroline Russell pushing the Mayor of London to take action on air pollution.

Like Amelia, bravely sharing her experience of abuse, to stand in solidarity with other survivors.

Like Jenny in the Lords, or Molly, Jean and Keith in the European Parliament.

Like Alison Teal, arrested for challenging the destruction of trees in Sheffield.

And now nominated as councillor of the year!

Consistent Green voices.

Powerful Green voices.

Speaking up when others are silent.

Speaking truth to power.

Our voices count. And they counted in June's General Election.

Today I want to thank every single one of you who worked so hard on our campaign.

You were brave and uncompromising. You said the environment must be front and centre. You said "No" means "No" on nuclear weapons. You said an emphatic "yes" to shaking up the archaic straightjacket of First Past the Post.

And you championed the most radical, future-facing manifesto of any party.

Truthful about the economy and truthful about how we TRANSFORM our country.

Thank you.

Conference, today is a day for honesty. It's a time for straight talking. A time for speaking the truth.

As YOU did at the general election, I am speaking from my heart now.

And I want to talk with you about electoral alliances.

Maybe, if the other parties had been willing to work with us Theresa May wouldn't be sitting in Number 10 today.

22 local Green parties bravely stood aside to change British politics. Many, many more, bravely stood candidates to give our Green vision a voice.

This was never going to be an easy election. It was always going to be about the two biggest parties.

And we suffered at the hands of a two-party system.

It hurt. And I know many of us still feel that hurt. I do.

But Conference let's not forget what we achieved together.

Our ideas and policies are now common currency. Part of the mainstream.

We achieved the Party's second best general election result.

And we helped deny Theresa May her majority and her mandate.

The Dementia Tax – dead.

The ban on fox hunting – safe.

The extreme brexiteers – in retreat

The Tories in disarray.

Conference, I know that sometimes it may not feel like we are winning.

But where we lead, others follow.

Our London Assembly members forced a Living Wage.

Our MEPs stood up for refugees when others stood back.

And in Parliament, we have consistently kept climate change on the agenda.

And you know what. I believe that we will be the most influential party in twenty first century politics.

We warned the system was unsustainable.

And then there was the financial crisis.

In 2010 we were told by the Tories, by Labour, by the Lib Dems – that austerity was the only answer.

We said no. And we kept saying no.

We joined UK uncut on the streets. We marched to Downing Street.

We bravely dared to be different.

And seven years later the agenda HAS changed.

What we were saying then – that neoliberalism is dying and must be replaced – has become the mainstream.

We have changed the minds of other parties on fracking and we are changing the debate about a universal basic income.

Winning is about elections AND it's about the way we bravely and steadily speak the truth all the time.

Other parties might flirt with changing the economy. Or the welfare system. But we are the only Party that is honest about how much things NEED to change.

We are the only party who will collectively design a future where we can all thrive – and have a larger life.

The only Party prepared to stand up and tell it how it is.

The only Party consistently asking the big questions that matter.

The only Party of real change.

Conference, the tories ARE led by a zombie Prime Minister.

But it isn't just Theresa May.

The Conservative Party has rot at its core.

A party that desperately grasps for the hands of deniers, despots and dictators.

That sells weapons to human rights abusers.

That puts 'go home' vans on our streets.

That has turned doctors and teachers into border guards.

Rotten to the core.

And at that core is a particular type of poison. And it's called Boris Johnson.

Ok, In many ways he IS a joke. But then you listen to what he's actually saying.

Let's not pretend that Boris Johnson's comments about dead bodies in Libya was an aberration.

It wasn't.

This is the man who calls Barack Obama "part Kenyan" with "ancestral dislike" of the UK.

Who describes Congolese people as having "Watermelon Smiles".

Calls Commonwealth citizens "flag waving piccaninnies."

Uses his Telegraph column to cast doubt on climate change.

Suggests Papuan people are cannibals.

And ran a magazine which accused Liverpool fans of "wallowing in it" after Hillsborough.

This is not new bigotry. It's old. It's unacceptable. And it's time the Conservative Party took collective responsibility for this human wrecking ball and kicked him out of the Cabinet.

Speaking truth to power.

So I have something else I want to say to the Tories.

We are the only country in Europe locking up refugees in detention centres with no time limit.

It beggars belief that in 21st Century Britain, thousands fleeing war and persecution are shut away indefinitely in conditions worse than prison. Right here. Right now.

A few weeks ago I visited one of these detention centres. I heard first-hand the stories of those from Eritrea, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, and China. Of their suffering at the hands of despotic regimes. And now they suffer at the hands of this Government.

In Britain. Three crammed to a cell. Deprived of medical treatment. Abused, beaten and drugged. Solitary confinement used as punishment.

In our prisons there is a suicide attempt every three days. In our detention centres – despite a population thirty times smaller – it happens every day.

Our detention system is a stain on our nation's conscience, it's a hallmark of this government's cruelty. And it must end. Now.

And hear this too. If you want to solve the refugee crisis, then stop creating refugees.

It's time someone stood up for the UK's aid budget and made a case for trade rules that are genuinely fair.

Conference, we can use our wealth for good. It can transform lives.

It is, quite simply, a matter of life and death.

We can give communities around the world a chance to develop the resilience they need. The independence they deserve. The freedom and opportunity that is their right.

Let me be clear. I want to see our aid budget expand, not shrink.

I want the UK to make a positive difference in the world. To show leadership by tackling environmental breakdown, conflict and poverty.

And I want to transform the Department for International Development into something new, brave and fit for the future we are forging.

A Department for Peacebuilding and Security.

That's how we face the future in a global economy.

That's how we can proudly take our place on the world stage.

That's how our small island can use its power for the common good.

We have choices. And the choices we make, make the future.

And there is no greater threat to that future than the choices being made now about nuclear weapons.

Today I want to say a huge congratulations to ICAN, the International Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons. On Friday they won the Nobel Peace Prize for their work in bringing about the Global Nuclear Ban Treaty.

There's a cosy consensus in Westminster in support of nuclear weapons. But we're willing to speak the truth.

The UK refused to take part in talks on the UN's nuclear ban treaty.

It's one thing to duck a TV debate. But to boycott the chance to rid the world of nuclear weapons is a reckless abdication of responsibility, a moral outrage, and a gamble with our planet.

The heightened tensions between the US and North Korea have brought us close to the brink of nuclear war. Yet the UK Government turned away from a chance to wage peace and the official opposition stayed silent.

But the truth will be told.

Nuclear weapons belong in the past. They are dangerous. They do not bring peace. And we want a world without them.

Finding our place in the world matters like never before, as we face the prospect of Brexit.

And the truth still matters too.

The government knows that the more people hear the truth about Brexit, the less they like what's on offer.

Britain is still being lied to and that's why we are demanding the Government's 50 Secret Studies into the impact of Brexit be brought into the open now.

That's why we are demanding a ratification referendum once a final deal has been agreed.

And that's why we bravely continue to say our future is better in Europe.

Conference, the truth is that Brexit will make us all poorer in every sense.

And let's be clear. Leaving the single market would be the door to a fresh wave of austerity under the Tories.

Let me honest about something else:

Freedom of movement has been good for Britain and we will never turn on our neighbours, our friends, our families. Never deny them their rights.

We are now the only party standing up unequivocally for Freedom of Movement. The only Party that true internationalists can call home.

We are not afraid to embrace a future that protects migrants' rights, rejoices in diversity and shares the benefits of free movement fairly and equally.

We are not afraid of the truth. And we are not afraid to stand up to those spreading lies. Those pedalling hate. And those putting up walls.

And a Green voice of truth is essential when it comes to climate breakdown.

Because that is what we already face.

The lethal hurricanes battering the Caribbean last month are a deadly reminder of what that means.

Of what happens when those most able to tackle climate change refuse to protect those who will face its worst effects.

And Sir Alan Duncan. When you stood up in the House of Commons and accused Caroline of lacking humanity for talking about climate change, you exposed your own inhumanity.

We'll take no lectures from you or any Conservative about 'compassion'.

27 million people are already fleeing climate disasters each year.

Drought and famine in Chad causing starvation.

Sea levels and floods in Bangladesh threatening livelihoods and lives.

Conference, we are all citizens of the world and each one of us has a right to a safe home.

That's why I am proud to support organisations like Hidden Voices, asking the UN to give climate refugees the long overdue recognition they deserve.

The climate crisis needs vision and brave leadership

Instead we get Theresa May and Donald Trump. Denying, dithering and fiddling while the planet burns.

But in the next few decades there may be no Maldives, no Seychelles.

Miami, New Orleans, and Atlantic City have little chance of survival. Many scientists assume we'll lose them within the century.

Climate change threatens nearly every aspect of human life on this planet.

It won't wait for us to wake up and it definitely won't wait for the media to face facts.

It beggars belief that those with their heads in the sand are still given air time.

2017 must be the year denial and complacency ends.

They wouldn't give a platform to the tobacco lobby.

They wouldn't give a platform to flat earthers.

The BBC won't even give a platform to Jeremy Clarkson.

So why give airtime to climate change deniers?

The Government has allowed a public health crisis to unfold right under its nose. Its own plans to clean up our air are so bad they are illegal.

The truth is we need a rapid transition to zero emissions: electric vehicles, streamlined public transport, and investment in cycling and walking.

And we need it fast.

That's why today I am proud to launch the Green Party's Breathing Cities campaign to secure zero emission pledges from five of our dirtiest cities within five years.

Reclaiming our cities as places to live, work and play. Free from the threat of air pollution.

Putting in place the infrastructure we need to face the future squarely. A

future where the environment is at the heart of all we do.

And conference, that's the biggest truth we speak – and which other parties deny.

The environment is the food we eat. The water we drink. The air we breathe.

And any economy that does not redress the imbalances that are irrevocably degrading our environment is doomed.

We want an economy that sustains our life giving planet.

That nurtures people's aspirations.

That redistributes not just wealth but the sources of that wealth.

An economy where success is measured not in terms of growth but in terms of the quality of the lives we live.

An economy for a larger, fairer and braver future.

As my friend and colleague Andrew Cooper says: "Try holding your breath while you count your money".

I'd like to see the environment secretary Michael Gove attempt that one.

Conference, did you know that last week Gove claimed he was a member of the first and most ambitious green party?

Well, I went and checked our membership records, and I couldn't find his name in there anywhere...

Astonishingly, it seems like he might have actually been talking about the Conservative Party.

But the environment is not something to bolt on – it's got to be an intrinsic part of the economy of the future.

So I have just one word for Gove – and that word is Hinkley.

Owned by a Chinese company. Run by the French. Subsidised by the British taxpayer.

Running a technology that has never worked. Anywhere in the world.

And all with the blessing of the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats and Labour.

If Hinkley ever gets off the starting blocks it will generate power 20% more expensive than offshore wind.

Friends, the sun is the only nuclear reactor we will ever need.

Hinkley makes no sense economically.

Hinkley makes no sense environmentally.

So let's make sense and let's make Hinkley history.

Hinkley is a white elephant and so too are HS2 and the plans for a new runway at Heathrow.

They are symbols of the past and have no place in a future in which people and planet thrive.

You don't get a renewable energy revolution while sinking subsidies into dirty nuclear power stations and fossil fuels.

You don't transform access to public transport with a mega railway that rips through local communities.

You don't get clean air while expanding airports and roads.

And you don't get a healthy economy while you are addicted to growth.

Conference, we know it's time for something different. Time to reimagine everything.

We must start by asking who the economy is for.

We need a new economy with people at the centre and in balance with the natural world.

And that will need a real shift of power – and fundamental structural change.

The challenge before us is to collectively design an economy where we all thrive.

Regeneration and redistribution built in from the start.

A future that's smart. Where we can work together not against one another. Where we do more with less.

One that rejects stale binary choices.

That opts instead for the strength that comes from diversity. Where the state and the individual have a role alongside the household and the commons.

All focussed on one clear objective: a world in which every person can lead their life with dignity, opportunity and community

That future is already being written.

By the neighbourhoods generating their own solar power.

Taking over local pubs as valuable community assets.

Setting up local produce schemes to give the poorest residents subsidised fresh food.

Like the Library of Things in South London. A social enterprise, where you pay a small charge to borrow everything from DIY equipment to kitchenware.

Now imagine one in every community. On every high street. Cutting the cost of living. Giving us more choice. Giving us more space. Liberating us from the need to own.

Together we can redesign the way we think about work too.

Of course not everything that comes from new technology is good.

The changing world of work and the rise of automation can be scary.

The challenges they pose will be overcome not just by ending exploitative zero hours contracts, but by a shorter working week.

We want to give people longer with their families, in their communities, doing what makes them happy.

And we know many employers want this too.

And we won't stop there.

With the rise of the gig economy we want to see all workers given more flexibility with basic rights like holiday leave and sick pay. And we want those rights to be extended, too.

Let's deal too with the exploitation by companies like Uber. The workers, many from Black, Minority Ethnic groups, many EU nationals, once again finding themselves pawns in a high stakes game. This time between Transport for London and Uber bosses.

But we could have a mutually owned, publicly regulated, Uber equivalent in every city in the UK. With accessible vehicles for the disabled. Powered by renewable electricity. Safety and security assured. Where every worker gets flexibility and fair pay.

The sharing economy taking cars off the road and tackling congestion.

That's what a Green economy looks like.

That's what elected Greens up and down Britain are working to achieve.

That's what we stand for and that's why we are the Party of the future.

For education and welfare too we need to imagine something radically better.

Expanding horizons for our young people not limiting them with endless testing.

Not just ending poverty but creating a future where everyone is liberated to fulfil their potential and their dreams.

Scrapping SATS, abolishing Ofsted and replacing universal credit with a

universal basic income.

Putting trust in one another, in people's enormous capacity to create.

Where I live in South London, the community is doing just that. And it wants to take control.

At Cressingham Gardens in Tulse Hill the residents have come up with their own scheme to regenerate their estate. One that would create warmer, securer homes. And more housing than the council is proposing through its reckless demolition programme.

When we trust the people, they can come up with the solutions they need.

Together we can co-produce the future.

We can shape our public services with meaningful community ownership.

We can pioneer a future in which we all have a stake.

The Green Party would give local people power to decide what happens to them and what gets spent where.

Participatory budgeting. Putting financial power in people's hands.

With regional banks that invest in the kinds of bonds and shares and trusts that hold communities together.

Creating strong resilient economies to withstand the winds of globalisation.

Conference, the Green Party is the party of small business.

Of creators, givers, sharers and contributors.

Of the little guy. The social entrepreneur. The activist. The creative coder and the brave builders.

The Party for anyone who has a dream.

For everyone that wants an economy working for them, not against them.

The need for the Green Party has never been greater.

Because the consequences for tomorrow of what we are doing today have never been greater.

We don't just need a technological shift. We need a paradigm shift.

That's the truth we are speaking. Everyday. By being here, by standing up and doing the things that no one else will.

Our business is change. Looking to the future not a mythical past.

So, if you want a party that will tell it how it is. A Party that won't shut

down debate or duck questions. That is brave enough to make the right choices and stick by them.

Then the Green Party should be your home.

If you want a party that believes in democracy from the bottom up, not centralised control. That speaks truth to power and is not afraid to use its power to empower others.

Then the Green Party should be your home.

If you want a Party that believes in making the desirable feasible.

Then the Green Party should be your home.

We are pioneers and we are sharers. We are creators and we are insurgents

We are the only future possible

We are the Green Party

ENDS.

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Conference approves policy for Windrush Day Bank Holiday



9 October 2017

At its Autumn Conference in Harrogate the Green Party has agreed a new policy calling for the introduction of a Bank Holiday to mark the contribution migrants have made to Britain.

The policy was passed overwhelming by delegates at their conference.

Co-leader Jonathan Bartley said:

“In a political climate that has become increasingly hostile towards migrants, it is more important than ever that we speak up, cherish, and recognise the enormous contribution they have made to this country. Nothing can be done to completely right the historic wrongs that were inflicted on the travellers, the slaves, and the refugees who have come to Britain but we

can use our influence today to make Britain a more welcoming and inclusive society tomorrow."

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