

Grenfell: We need a new council with new ideas says Green Party

6 September 2017

The Green Party has called for the full resignation of the Kensington and Chelsea Council Cabinet after it was revealed that of 196 households who survived the Grenfell fire, only 29 have been found new permanent accommodation [1].

The party says that the resulting by-elections would give local residents the opportunity to vote for “leaders in whom they have faith”.

The party has also said that a new council should commit to a set of “radical” policies to help house survivors from the Grenfell fire including a new agreement that social housing must take planning and building priority going forwards.

The Green Party candidate for Kensington Jennifer Nadel said:

“It is utterly scandalous that the majority of survivors from Grenfell have still not been housed. Many are living crammed into tiny hotel rooms unable to begin the process of healing from their trauma and grief rebuilding their lives.

“It shows yet again that this council is not fit for purpose. The same councillors who presided over the tragedy and the appalling failures that followed still have their seats. They should resign now triggering by-elections so that residents can elect leaders in whom they can have faith. It is a continuing insult that they remain in place while residents who have lost everything have not even been housed. The council has the money to solve this problem, what it lacks is the will and that has to change.

“A new council with fresh ideas could commit to a radical set of reforms including taking hold of empty homes to house residents, the conversion of abandoned buildings into new social housing, and an agreement that from now on the priority will be to build social homes rather than to give planning permission for more new, expensive, private homes that are beyond the reach of most residents.”

Notes

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EU must block imports from Amazon forest reserve, say Green MEPs



4 September 2017

Green MEP Molly Scott Cato has joined with fellow Greens to call on the EU Commission to block all imports extracted from Amazonian reserves in Brazil.

The call follows recent proposals by the Brazilian President, Michel Temer, to open up at least 30% of the 46,000 square kilometer [Renca reserve](#) – an area the size of Denmark – to mining and large-scale agroindustry.

In a [letter](#) to Trade Commissioner, Cecilia Malmström and Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, the MEPs urge the Commission to use the [EU-Mercosur Agreement](#), a new trade deal currently being negotiated between Latin American countries and the EU, to prevent further destruction of the Amazon rainforest. With Brazilian imports into the EU being dominated by primary products – over a quarter of which are minerals – Greens fear the deal could do the opposite and encourage European extractive and agribusiness to exploit exports from areas like the Renca reserve.

[In a letter published in today's Guardian newspaper](#), Molly says:

“The proposal to open up the Renca reserve in the Amazon for exploitation by large mining companies would be catastrophic for the earth’s climate, for biodiversity and for local indigenous communities. At the same time, the EU is negotiating a new trade agreement with Mercosur, the Latin America regional trade bloc, of which Brazil currently holds the presidency. This is a vital opportunity for the EU to use our trade muscle to make clear that the Amazon is not for sale and that minerals extracted from a protected reserve will never find their way onto European markets.”

The Green MEPs also urge the Commission to remind Brazil of its commitment to the [UN Convention on Biological Diversity](#) and point to [WTO rules](#) which say that trading parties have a legitimate right to ban imports on products if it is “necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health.”

Molly Scott Cato has pledged Greens will vote against any deal that threatens

protected areas in Brazil. She said:

“The European Parliament has a commitment to rainforest conservation and sustainable forest management in Brazil. MEPs will have a final vote on the Mercosur trade deal and Greens will vote against any agreement that increases trade in raw materials whilst threatening the most important rainforest on the planet.”

Although a Brazilian court last week [blocked](#) the attempt by President Temer to open up the Renca reserve, it is likely to be only a temporary reprieve for the area. Previously higher court judges have overturned rulings made by local courts.

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Green Party responds to arrest of life-member and activist Tina Rothery



2 September 2017

Responding to the news that Green Party life-member and activist Tina Rothery was arrested for protesting at the fracking site at Preston New Road today, Deputy Leader of the party Amelia Womack said:

“I offer my full support and total admiration to Tina. She is an inspiration and has proved time and again that to live in a free society we must be constantly challenging the decisions of those in power. She has put herself on the line to stop dirty and destructive fracking and with supporters and her political party behind her that effort will not be in vain.”

ENDS

Notes

Tina Rothery was awarded a life-membership of the Green Party for her activism. She is a member of the “Anti-Fracking Nanas” and is the former candidate for Tatton. She was arrested this afternoon on Preston New Road, Lancashire, as she protested against Cuadrilla’s fracking of the site. She will appear in court on 10 October 2017.

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Green Party women take direction action against fracking in Lancashire



31 August 2017

Four women including two Green Party Councillors took direct action yesterday outside Cuadrilla's fracking site on Preston New Road near Little Plumpton in Lancashire.

The women are all members of the Green Party and are peacefully protesting against increasing extraction of fossil fuels. Three of the women locked themselves together outside the entrance to the fracking site and were later arrested and charged with obstruction of the highway.

Caroline Jackson is a Lancaster City Councillor and a retired headteacher. She said:

“We have brought a boat to the fracking site to highlight the fact that fracking will make climate change worse by emitting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Fracking will therefore contribute to rising sea levels. Around half a billion people around the world are at risk from rising sea levels.”

Emily Heath is a university lecturer in Earth Sciences. She said:

“Continuing to develop new sources of fossil fuels is utter madness. We have abundant renewable energy all around us, and yet the Government is hell-bent on undermining the renewable energy industry, because they have vested interests in the fossil fuel industry and seem to be incapable of thinking beyond the short term.”

Mollie Foxall is a retired NHS manager. She explained:

“I am taking direct action because the Government has left me no choice. They overturned the local democratic decision to not allow fracking in this area. We are calling on the Government to put people's lives ahead of corporate profits, and stop backing fracking.”

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Green Party: Government failing immigration detention promise



25 August 2017

The Green Party has warned progress to cut immigration detention is still far too slow to keep the last Government's promise [1] to reduce the numbers of people locked up and the time they spend detained.

Home Office immigration figures released yesterday (Thursday 24 August) [2] show the number of people entering detention in the past 12 months decreased by 12%.

The Green Party has repeated calls for an end to indefinite detention after the figures show eight people detained for more than five years [3].

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

"Detention is not the answer for anyone and progress to reduce the numbers in immigration detention centres is still far too slow. Amber Rudd needs to take bold action if she is to meet Government commitments to cut detention.

"Across the country detention centres are indefinitely holding people who have committed no crime and are often fleeing torture, with these stats revealing eight people currently in detention have been locked up for more than five years. This is obscene and a violation of human rights.

"The uncompassionate and ineffective practice of indefinite detention must end."

The stats were released a day after reports that the number of EU citizens detained for suspected immigration offences has risen by 27% in the past year [4].

Bartley added:

"The rising number of EU nationals in detention adds to the already hostile environment currently facing those from European countries who have made their home in the UK."

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jan/14/uk-must-reduce-detention-shaw-immigration-report>

2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2017/how-many-people-are-detained-or-returned>
3. Table 14:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/638608/detention-apr-jun-2017-tables.ods
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/aug/23/number-of-eu-citizens-detained-in-uk-up-by-27-figures-show>

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