

Greens call for rethink of education system on A-level results day



17 August 2017

The Green Party has accused the Government of 'moving the goalposts' in education and called for a rethink of the system on A-level results day.

Vix Lowthion, Green Party education spokesperson, said:

"As an A-level teacher myself, I know how stressful these exams – particularly these new exams – are for students, and how much work goes into preparing for them. Every result, every grade, has been hard fought for and has its very own story behind it.

"The continuous reduction in the number of students entered for arts and languages at A-level is very concerning. Creativity is a vital part of problem solving, and the arts is a huge industry in the UK. Brexit makes it even more vital to speak a second language. Post-16 education needs to be broader, and support a wider range of skills, if we are to produce well-rounded citizens for the future.

"The Government's constant moving of goalposts and changing of the rules of the game have heaped even more uncertainty upon our schools and our young people. We must halt any more hasty changes to exams, and provide better support for teachers in the classroom."

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-40952125>

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Greens slam Theresa May's cowardly response to Trump



16 August 2017

The Green Party has accused Theresa May of being a coward for failing to condemn Donald Trump's reaction to the violence in Charlottesville, Virginia [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

"Theresa May's failure to condemn Donald Trump's abhorrent response to the violence in Charlottesville is not only embarrassing but dangerous. We cannot allow fascism to go unchecked.

"Trump's press conference was a revolting display of hatred legitimised. His attempt to smear the people who stood up to Nazis as violent protesters was shameful. They should be applauded for fighting fascism where the prime minister and the president of the United States have failed to make a stand.

"Now is not the time for hand-holding. Theresa May must stop being cowardly and show zero tolerance for bigotry. Her silence makes her complicit."

Notes:

1. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/theresa-may-spokesman-comment-condemns-hate-violence-donald-trump-charlottesville-a7893381.html>

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Green Party responds to proposal for interim customs system



15 August 2017

The Green Party has responded to the announcement by David Davis that he is looking to secure a new customs arrangement with the EU in which the UK would maintain the same trading rules for an interim period [1].

Molly Scott Cato MEP, Green Party Brexit spokesperson, said:

"More breath-taking arrogance from the Tories. The belief that Davis can secure a custom-made customs union is both unhelpful and insulting. Why would the EU27 agree to granting a country that is not a member of the club the benefits of membership without restriction?

"This announcement is clearly neither realistic or rational and has more to

do with papering over the growing confusion and deep divisions within the Tory Party on how hard, soft, long or short Brexit should be."

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-40922177>

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Greens condemn High Court ruling against Sheffield tree protesters



15 August 2017

The Green Party is deeply disappointed by today's ruling by the High Court in favour of granting an injunction against tree felling protesters in Sheffield [1].

The injunction was taken out by Sheffield Council against Green Councillor Alison Teal, two other named protestors, and 'persons unknown'. It is aimed at preventing peaceful protesting against the council's tree felling programme.

The ruling means that campaigners will not legally be permitted to continue standing up for Sheffield's trees and local residents by preventing the felling of healthy trees.

Cllr Teal has vowed to continue opposing the council's plans, despite the injunction, and expressed dismay at the council's heavy-handed tactics.

She said:

"I am very disappointed with this outcome, but will continue to do all I can to save Sheffield trees. Sheffield Greens will not stop standing up for Sheffield residents and communities who do not want this disastrous and unpopular tree felling programme to continue. In the short term, we will of course be looking into possible avenues of appeal against this decision.

"It never had to come to this. The council says that this action was a 'last resort', but in truth they have wasted time and taxpayers' money on this needless, aggressive action when all they had to do was acknowledge residents' concerns and to mediate.

“In this, the case of Sheffield City Council vs The People, it is democracy and the residents of Sheffield who have lost. This decision by the high court is very worrying, as the right to peaceful protest has been fundamentally threatened.

“The council’s disastrous and unpopular tree felling programme continues to be a story of national and international embarrassment for our city.”

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“This ruling is deeply disappointing. Alison and the other protesters have shown nothing but integrity and courage in the face of a council determined to plough ahead with an ecologically illiterate and ill-considered tree felling programme.

“The council’s plans are nothing less than environmental vandalism. This is a move by an authoritarian Labour council that knows it has lost the argument and so is attempting to shut down debate. The Green Party will continue to stand with Alison and the residents of Sheffield who oppose the destruction of perfectly healthy trees. Peaceful protest is a fundamental right and an integral part of a healthy democracy.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/tree-fight-will-continue-despite-injunction-ruling-say-sheffield-campaigners-1-8703673>

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Green Party responds to inflation figures



15 August 2017

The Green Party has responded to the latest inflation figures [1], which reveal inflation has held steady at 2.6 per cent in July. However the retail price index has climbed to 3.6 per cent, meaning rail fares will rise by 3.6 per cent in January 2018 – the highest increase in fares in five years [2].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“This Government is caught like a rabbit in the economic headlights,

paralysed and without a credible plan about what to do. The latest inflation figures will be little comfort to those who are struggling to feed their families and pay their rent. The cost of living is rising while wages are stagnating and the threat of Brexit continues to hang over the country's head.

"Meanwhile all the Government appears to want to do is push ahead with its scattergun approach. Its blind allegiance to credit fuelled and largely illusory growth will do little to raise living standards and a lot to exacerbate the very problems it should be addressing.

"The Green Party is the only party talking about making the right choices and bringing about the shift in power and sustainable, transitioned economy we urgently need. Workers and small business should be empowered and we must embrace bold new ideas like a universal basic income, which would provide security and opportunity, and a shorter working week, to redress the imbalance in our economy."

Notes:

1. <https://www.ft.com/content/883dbbf-33f1-3766-bc93-74d7630468de>
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/aug/15/commuters-brace-for-stepest-fare-rise-in-five-years-as-uk-inflation-rises-to-36>

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