

No environmental justice without social, racial and economic justice, says deputy leader Zack Polanski



1 October 2022

- **Zack Polanski highlights importance of diversity, representation and electoral reform in speech to Harrogate conference**
- **“There’s only one authentic response to people struggling just to get by and that response is solidarity” – Zack Polanski**

The new deputy leader of the Green Party, Zack Polanski, has told the party’s conference in Harrogate today that there is no environmental justice without social, racial and economic justice too.

Polanski used his maiden speech to pledge to campaign and speak with – rather than for – those people who don’t have a voice.

He said:

“Representation is important. Diversity is important. It’s massively important that I use this platform to campaign and speak with – rather than for – those people who don’t have that voice. There are so many people who feel unseen, unheard, unrepresented and we as a party can both connect with these people and take their worries and needs and speak truth to power.”

“Ultimately there’s only one authentic response to people struggling just to get by and in the Green Party we know that response is solidarity.”

Polanski also drew attention to “our broken voting system” as one of the key barriers to representation and urged Labour leader Keir Starmer to listen to his members on electoral reform:

“We have a broken voting system that means people are not represented properly in decisions made on everything from policing, transport to the NHS. We also know that if we want grown up politics; grown up collaborations that work in people’s best interests, then we need Proportional Representation. We’re delighted that Labour members, and unions, have backed Proportional Representation in overwhelming numbers. But Keir is saying no: no to fair votes. So let me say to Keir Starmer – listen to your members.”

Zack Polanski also praised his predecessor Amelia Womack, noting how her dedicated service has resulted in the huge growth of Green Party councillors during her eight years in post.

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Deputy Leader Autumn Conference speech 2022



1 October 2022

Thank you.

Let me tell you about what happened in my first engagement as the new Deputy Leader, I was at a community garden: a group of urban food growers were launching a handbook called Growing for Change. I'd been invited to speak to everyone and I got there early as I was keen to see what other people had to say too.

They were making the clear, excellent points that we should all have access to growing our own food – particularly in a cost of living crisis.

I too was already pretty clear about what needed to be said: that there is no environmental justice without social, racial and economic justice too – and that urban food growing is a perfect, really tangible example of where these different aspects come together particularly for those struggling with the rising price of food and being able to grow their own.

I was just about to speak

-The speaker before me finishing up about their work at lots of community gardens, when suddenly he stepped into the audience, got down on one knee in front of the person next to me. And delivered a spontaneous wedding proposal!

Not something I was expecting. Could have gone very wrong, but luckily she said yes. And, although a hard act to follow, we then did get back to talking about the climate and nature emergency.

So as well as congratulating Noemi and Andy on their future together and barring another proposal in the offing – I want to talk about another hard act to follow, indeed a spectacular act to follow and that's our outgoing deputy leader Amelia Womack.

Amelia has been our deputy leader for 8 years, seen us through several general and local elections, a pandemic, brexit and very wonderfully, she told Piers Morgan live on TV that he was getting his knickers in a twist over a vegan sausage.

Amelia in her time as Deputy Leader has seen the party grow with her dedicated support. When you look at the trajectory of Green Party councillors

we've won, yes, it was trickling upwards by a handful each year but it accelerated during Amelia's term of office as she toured the country week after week for around, I make it 416 weeks of her term, and in the last few years we all know what has happened.

I want to take a moment before talking about what comes next, to say on behalf of all of conference, those now 558 councillors and the entire Green Party, – Amelia Womack, thank you!

It's now been a month since I was elected as your new Deputy Leader and what a month it's been. My first week wasn't even over and Liz Truss had become Prime Minister.

As with any new Prime Minister we have to hope for the good of the country that she can rise to the scale of the challenges facing us. But previous experience suggests she won't – in fact in a very short space of time, she's already made things considerably worse and rather than reversing her awful decisions, she looks like she's just going to dig deeper and deeper.

And we know all this not just because we listened to that catastrophic mini-budget last Friday but because we talk to people every day – on their doorsteps, on picket lines, at bus stops – we know the problems. And in the Green Party we know the solutions too.

We know that the same actions to tackle the cost of living crisis are often the exact same actions that we need to tackle the climate crisis.

From insulating homes to investing in renewables to pushing hard for the fundamental human right to breathe clean air – we have been pushing our plans for decades and more recently across the country implementing them into real action that changes people's lives.

So when I say there's no environmental justice without racial, economic and social justice too – what do I actually mean? It's the idea that everything is interconnected. We want system change. We cannot have business as usual. So- Let's look into that a little deeper – let's begin with environmental justice.

The IPCC – the intergovernmental panel on climate change – says we need to reach peak emissions within the next 18 months. It seems to me that other parties simply haven't heard this call or are choosing not to hear it. As Greta Thunberg said "Is my microphone on?"

We in The Green Party have consistently placed protection of our planet at the heart of everything we do. And we will continue to do so.

We know though that in order to achieve that our society must simultaneously tackle the other injustices too. They are embedded in it so let's talk about those. They are often the consequences of colonialism – we need to name that.

A society built deliberately on the exploitation of people in order to feed our society's reliance on fossil fuels. The most recent United Nations report

finally included a line about colonialism . Brazilian Indigenous activist Taily Terena opened the Peoples Pavillion at COP26 with these words:
“Colonialism caused climate change.

Our rights and traditional knowledge are the solution.” And she’s right. Not only do colonial states exploit the land and resources that others are dependent on – they devastated ecosystems too. We need to listen to the people who are baring the worst brunts of the crisis who have often done the least to cause it.

That’s why you can’t have environmental justice without racial justice too.

And here in the UK, let’s take air pollution for example – whether it’s campaigning against incinerators or new road building projects or voting against cuts to public transport, far too often these occur in the middle of communities of people of colour who can feel like they don’t have access to representation or power. That there is nothing they can do.

I was having this exact conversation this week in Manchester with Cllr Ekua Bayu who has joined the Green group from the Labour Party (welcome Ekua!) joining Astrid Johnson and Rob Nunney as our Manchester Councillors.

We were speaking at an event with the Young Greens where Ekua spoke powerfully about the community she serves in Hulme. She spoke about the need for Green politics to not be abstract. but to be with communities – to be active, supporting people who may never have had the resource or opportunity to literally get their hands in the soil.

We know as a party we need to do more to reach out to these communities and be clear that we will always stand by them.

And then on to social Justice. We are in a cost of living crisis but we know that this is really an income crisis. For years peoples wages have remained stagnant or fallen whilst shareholders take home large dividends, while people at the top have seen their profits skyrocket and lucrative contracts awarded to their mates.

The Tories never acknowledge their mismanagement of our economy, their ideologically driven so called “trickle down economics” , the unforgiveable lifting of the cap on bankers’ bonuses. Conference, haven’t they noticed? people are suffering. And with the inequality crisis too, it’s the most vulnerable people who are always being hit the hardest.

I’ve been proud to be out on picket lines with working people. We know in this party that when people ask for our help we give it. Ultimately there’s only one authentic response to people struggling just to get by and in the Green Party we know that response is solidarity-

And here we have yet another cabinet set on ripping up our human rights and creating phoney

culture wars. They only have one tactic. To scapegoat. To other. To blame. When I was elected as Deputy Leader I talked about being the first Jewish and

gay Deputy Leader in British History – and some people online asked me why that was relevant. It's a fair question – but I think there's an even fairer answer.

Representation is important. Diversity is important. Not just for me to advocate for my communities – although I will certainly do that too – but it's massively important that I use this literal platform to campaign and speak with – rather than for – those people who don't have that voice.

There are so many people who feel unseen, unheard, unrepresented and we as a party can both connect with these people and take their worries and needs and speak truth to power.. And crucially – be there to protect them when they want it when the powerful hold them in their sights.

Whether it's refugees, Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, people with disabilities and/or the LGBTQIA+ community (and of course that includes trans people as there's no LGB without the T) – history has horrifically demonstrated that when they come for one of us, they come for all of us...and conference, we will stick together.

Environmental justice, racial justice, social justice:

We won't let them get away with any dereliction of duty. People can say we're virtue signalling – I don't think there's anything wrong with wanting to signal towards virtuousness and they can call us woke – Fine. Yes! We're awake, alert and ready to go.

And whilst others may sleep through all the alarms – ringing for climate ringing for the cost of living – ,we are the ones leaping to action. We do not have time to keep hitting snooze!

And then there's economic justice. We talk about this winter being difficult – if not impossible for people. And that's shockingly true. But those in power need to also face up to the fact that millions of people in the UK in 2022 are already living in extreme poverty.

Damp, cold and mouldy homes, struggling to keep food on the table, struggling to pay their rising bills We as a party have long advocated for plans like a Universal Basic Income – we know that this has the potential to lift millions of people out of poverty.

In London where I'm elected to the Assembly and chair the Environment committee, I've been making the case to the Mayor to do a pilot scheme and have recently commissioned a report looking at how we can best engage with local communities and have these conversations.

It's these examples that are happening all across England and Wales: elected Greens and local members understanding the power of good ideas and making change in their communities.

And we know economic justice isn't just about money: all too often with poverty it is a lack of space and time as well as a lack of resources that means people struggle to properly manage their everyday circumstances, to

get everything sorted and in order, to overcome the anxiety that can literally grip their chest on a daily basis. That's why it's so crucial that we get more Greens elected so we can turn the power of our good ideas into reality.

And talking of good ideas you can't have environmental, racial, social or economic justice without democratic justice too.

You didn't really think I was going to give a speech without mentioning our broken voting system? First Past the Post has never worked for anyone – the difference now is that everyone has started to notice that we are stuck. Time and again in General Elections people see candidates like our Prime Minister say she doesn't even mind being unpopular – as she knows she can still get first past that post on a minority of votes. We know that if we want grown up politics, grown up collaborations that work in people's best interests – then we need Proportional Representation. It's no longer if – it's when.

So let me say this to Keir Starmer – listen to your members. We're delighted that Labour members, and unions, have backed Proportional Representation in overwhelming numbers. We saw the feed in the conference hall as people raised their hands to vote for a fairer system. I punched the air and celebrated but very quickly reality started to bite. Keir is saying no. No to fair votes.

He says "It's not a priority." We have a broken voting system that means people are not represented properly in decisions made from everything from policing, transport to the NHS. Literally being people's representative is one of the most fundamental duties and privileges of being an elected politician. It's not OK to present representation as unimportant or a distraction. It's not ok to continue to support a broken status quo and hope that no one notices. For a society that includes everyone that has to include the right to a fair vote for everyone. And in the Green Party – representing people IS our priority.

And conference we ARE representing people. Greens all across England and Wales are proving even with the odds stacked against us, even with the huge sums of money ploughed into the other parties by big business – we will still win even under the current voting system.

Just this month in Lancaster we saw Sue Tyldesley take us from 33% to a whopping 65.7% of the vote becoming one of our newest councillors. Huge congratulations to Sue and the entire team.

This isn't even an unusual story. Over and over again as local results come through – we see the power of an organised Green campaign team, embedded in a local community, knocking on doors and getting out the vote. And it's not just at local level, The media are noticing too with Professor Sir John Curtice saying that the Greens "are a force in British Politics and we simply can't be ignored" and Labour copying our conference slogan almost identically – what can we say other than that we love recycling?

Joking aside, it's heartening when other parties take our ideas and in London with my colleagues Sian and Caroline – London Mayor Sadiq Khan regularly

takes up our ideas and implements them and in doing so makes millions of peoples lives better – but it's time to cut out the middle man. And so we all look to Parliament. Caroline Lucas is an amazing MP. She's doing brilliant work and punching far above her weight. Just imagine a whole parliament of Caroline Lucases – or rather less weirdly, a whole parliament of people embodying what she does speaking truth to power, with an authenticity, a compassion and a care we rarely see in our politics. We need to see people like Carla Denyer join her and let's get more Green MPs urgently speaking out and taking action on the change the country desperately needs.

To do this – we need to grow. It's wonderful that you're here and that you're engaged. We all know people who would be here too or join the party – but no one has asked them. Please, talk to your friends, to your family, to your work colleagues. Now is the perfect time to join our movement and to see it grow.

Conference – we know we're not powered by big business. We're powered by people. People like local party chairs, leaflet deliverers, people who manage social media accounts, collect data or make food for activists on action days (a vital job!) – everyone's contribution is hugely welcomed and has played a part in our past success.

I want to thank every single person both in this hall, watching online and more widely who have worked so hard to gain us the success we already have earned.

But there's still a lot of work to do.

Let's get to it – Person by person. Town by town. City by city. That's how we grow. That's how we have justice.

That's how we change our country.

Conference – let's go.

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30 September 2022

CARLA DENYER

Thanks so much for the fantastic welcome. It's great to be here in Harrogate. Thank you to Arnold for the kind introduction and to our chief executive Mary, for setting out so clearly our way forward as a party.

Every one of us knows this is a crunch moment for our country and for us as Greens. The next general election is critical, so whether that be in a few months or two years away – we intend to lead our party in making the absolute most of that opportunity and showing people the pathway to a Fairer Greener Country.

And after this week, good lord, the UK needs it.

What is this government doing?

It's been a week of complete chaos from a prime minister and a chancellor who have been in post less than a month.

Inflation rising higher and faster than we've seen in years.

The value of the pound at a record low.

A humiliating intervention from the IMF.

In pubs and gyms, staff rooms and supermarket queues everyone is talking about it – there is panic. Over mortgage rates, the prospect of lost pensions, over yet more spiralling costs.

And for what?

So that the Tories can give tax cuts to their mates. 45 billion pounds back for the 1% at the top of the pile. They like it – everyone else can lump it.

Not only are the Tories incompetent – let's put paid to the now laughable notion that they are 'good on the economy' – but they're also clearly *committed* to deepening inequality in this country.

They want the rich to get richer and it's no skin off their noses if the poor stay poor.

We don't think that's fair.

And while Liz Truss may struggle to find the words to defend the government's actions, we won't be staying silent about that unfairness.

To the Prime Minister we say – listen to the people, listen to the experts, choose evidence-based policy over fanatical ideology, and reverse your tax cuts for the rich.

Borrowing billions just so that bankers can have their bonus back is not how you run an economy.

ADRIAN RAMSAY

So let's talk more about fairness.

It's something we teach our children about when they're really young.

Whether it's not cheating at monopoly or making sure everyone gets a turn at snakes and ladders.

I have shown my own children why we don't stamp on other people's sandcastles and that sharing out the chocolate buttons is the right thing to do.

The fundamentals of fairness are at the heart of how we raise our children, whether we're parents or Aunties, granddads or family friends. We know the value of fairness and we want our kids to know it too.

And yet, in the most critical parts of our society – our healthcare, our economy, in the provision of our absolute essentials; public services, energy, water – and in our *democracy* – the concept of fairness has gone completely out of the window.

The reality in our country is that the biggest issue we face is inequality. And that's not an accident: it's a consequence of over a decade of government by a Tory party that refuses to accept that inequality is a harm in itself, and that reducing it should be at the very heart of good government.

The politicians in charge are in effect, cheating at monopoly and stamping on our sandcastles.

And the Tory commitment to inequality we've witnessed this week isn't new.

From the deep, cutting austerity of the Cameron years.

To Theresa May telling struggling nurses "there is no magic money tree"

To Boris Johnson's refusal to keep the £20 Universal credit uplift.

It's all paved the way to where we are today. In chaos. Because whoever the leader, the Tories are a party that rewards their wealthy members and donors and doesn't give a damn for the rest of us.

CARLA

And nowhere is this unfairness – this inequality – more apparent than in the cost of living scandal.

We know that inflation hurts the poorest the most – as those with the least spend a greater chunk of their income on the basics.

We don't need to look any further than the supermarket shelves to see spiralling costs:

Bread up 17%

A packet of rice up 15%

Pasta up 50%

Everywhere people turn they're seeing the things they need increasingly priced out of reach. And when it comes to energy – the situation is critical. In fact, it's terrifying – and it demands immediate action.

A few months ago I met a group of elderly residents in the St Pauls area of Bristol – members of the Windrush Generation. Everyone I spoke to was already doing all they could to keep their bills down – more efficient appliances, thick curtains, turning down the temperature on their boiler, but they're facing yet more price hikes and are running out of options.

ADRIAN

And it's not just in Bristol.

What we're seeing across the country is a deepening cost of living scandal.

Where councils are forced to create 'warm spaces' to keep people from freezing in their own homes.

Where the Citizens Advice bureau is inundated with caller after caller facing mounting debt.

And, where a small fraction of people – the profiteers, the company bosses and the dodgy landlords – keep making unimaginable sums of money while the rest of us suffer.

In 2022, in a wealthy country like the UK, we shouldn't be asking people to make these humiliating choices.

To accept a situation that has been caused by a failed energy policy and a decade of economic mismanagement.

They want us to think that this unfairness is inevitable. That there is no alternative. But you and I know that just isn't true. This unfairness is a choice.

So let's look at the action the government has taken on energy.

In the weeks before the price cap freeze was announced, people all over the UK had been raising their voices, demanding emergency action. We put out our own proposal to make sure energy was affordable and I'm proud that helped push the government to conclude something had to be done.

Because below the surface of this energy crisis is a whole system that's critically unfair – built with layer upon layer of corporate profit baked in, and shareholders skimming off a reward at every level.

So while freezing bills was needed – the Government should have demanded something in return for the billions going to energy firms. This was the chance to take our rightful share from the companies who have been fleecing us for far too long.

Instead, what we're seeing is billions poured into corporate coffers. Bills

frozen until – conveniently – just after a potential next general election – and absolutely no action to address the underlying causes of the energy crisis.

They could have – should have – gone so much further. And the Green Party would do, right now.

CARLA

We've got the leakiest homes in Europe – losing huge amounts of energy through badly sealed windows and poorly lined walls. We could be saving hundreds, thousands of pounds through insulation – reducing energy wastage, cutting bills and emissions. It really isn't rocket science. The cheapest bill is the one you don't have to pay.

We still rely heavily on fossil fuels to provide our energy despite renewables like solar and wind being significantly cheaper and greener.

So what's the solution?

We would introduce – immediately – an emergency tax package which would mean polluting companies and the very richest 1% of households contribute more, to fund a nationwide insulation and renewable energy programme, creating warmer, more comfortable homes and bringing bills down for good.

Rather than the Tories' feeble Windfall Tax, full of loopholes for the oil and gas industry, our Dirty Profits Tax would raise billions and accelerate the transition to renewable energy.

Instead of freezing the price cap at current high levels as the Conservatives, Labour and the Lib Dems want to do, rates that are *still* unaffordable for so many households, we would roll it back to where it was last October.

And we would bring the Big 5 energy retailers into public ownership, because only the government can make an intervention of this scale and ensure that we come out of this crisis more resilient and greener by insulating homes and transitioning towards renewables.

And there's even more practical, tangible things that could be done right now to make energy bills more affordable.

Remove standing charges which penalise households who are trying to keep their energy usage down.

Break the link between electricity and gas prices, to end the absurd situation where even when electricity is being generated cheaply from renewables, everyone pays the much higher cost of electricity produced by gas power stations. Imagine that in any other sector – one baker in a very expensive part of West London sells bread for £8 a loaf, so every bakery in the UK has to sell bread for the same price. Ridiculous.

And so the immediate answers *are* there, and so are the longer term solutions

to the crises we face around the cost of living and the climate.

ADRIAN

The UK hosted the COP climate conference last year – remember that?

The former prime minister made commitment after commitment to action on the climate and yet here we are, with the climate and nature emergency clearly at the bottom of the government's agenda.

We are told this is because attention has turned *instead* to the cost of living crisis, that Britain has neither the time nor inclination to be distracted by the green stuff.

No. People aren't stupid – they can see that these two crises – the ones that keep us up at night – go hand in hand, and so do the solutions.

While the weather here in Harrogate today is wet – it's just a few months since this country was gripped by extreme, headline making heat. But beyond the keeping cool tips and photos of people at the beach – was a picture of a natural world in turmoil.

40 degrees. In Britain. It still doesn't sound right, does it? Yet as pensioners suffered in their homes, and critical infrastructure ground to a halt – we know that worse is yet to come. It exposed that as a country we're simply not prepared for the extremes of weather that will now become more common.

And that for the sake of lives and livelihoods we need all levels of government to focus on ways of adapting to the changes that are already a certainty and act on commitments to tackle the climate emergency.

And that goes for the global picture too.

Pakistan has seen record levels of flooding this year with over 1400 lives lost and hundreds of thousands more devastated.

In Somalia a catastrophic drought has displaced more than a million people from their homes.

The warnings – if you can call them that – keep on coming and they continue to be ignored on a global and national scale. Rich countries including ours are failing in their duty to provide the necessary funding to the global south to deal with the dreadful impact of changes to the climate.

And policies at home are taking us in completely the wrong direction.

The removal of the fracking ban – fracking! Which communities have successfully campaigned so hard against, and won. Only for this to be bulldozed over by a government that doesn't care.

More drilling for oil and gas in the North sea. Flying in the face of any net zero strategy.

And, it's no overstatement to say that our natural environment is under direct threat from our own government.

Tearing up planning protections for wildlife habitats and water quality, once again favouring property developers over green spaces and local people.

Scrapping UK environmental protections that have been in place for decades. And removing their own so-called 'Brexit bonus' payment for farmers to manage the countryside for the benefit of wildlife.

Allowing water companies to pollute our beaches and rivers with sewage.

Conservationists and charities have come out hard against this destructive, dangerous set of actions because they know the harm they'll do. They understand that if nothing changes the consequences will be disastrous.

It's no wonder then that more and more voters from rural areas – traditional Conservative areas – are turning to the Greens as the only party willing to protect the environment and their communities.

CARLA

So then to our public services. The basics, the things we need for everyday life.

It's not just energy we want to bring into public hands, but our water and our railways too.

The current systems are out of date, falling apart, not fit for purpose – and yet bills and fares rise while efficiency plummets.

For the past 40 years we have been sold a political ideology obsessed with deregulation, market freedom, and the government not interfering. Not just the Conservatives but also Labour governments have subscribed to the idea that public services and basic human rights run for private profit is the way forward – but look where that's landed us.

The privatisation of our major public services has been an acute and painful failure – one that continues. A lack of state influence in our economy hasn't made things more competitive, it hasn't made things more efficient and it has not lowered prices.

The Green Party wants to see these crucial services – energy, water, transport – back in public hands where they belong. Where decisions are made for the good of you and your family, for people – not to line the pockets of shareholders.

With these policies – and our core aim to transform society for the benefit of all – it is no surprise that former Labour voters are finding their home with us.

ADRIAN

And then there's healthcare. Nowhere is the need for services to remain in public hands more acute than in our health service. Underfunding and selling off parts of our NHS have led to chronic staff shortages, soaring waiting times and a hugely demoralised workforce. There are 6.8 million people on NHS waiting lists – people living in pain, struggling through daily life – waiting months and years for treatment.

When I met the General Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing a few weeks ago the stories she told me were harrowing. Severe staff shortages meaning that hospital wards are massively overstretched – there are currently 50,000 nursing vacancies in this country. Nurses frequently having to stay hours beyond the end of their shift while their children wait for them to get home. And even more shockingly, hospitals having to provide washing machines at work and nurses relying on foodbanks because so many are struggling to get by on what they are paid. Truly disgraceful and heartbreaking.

The NHS is in a crisis.

And yes it's a crisis of funding.

And yes it's a crisis of privatisation and outsourcing.

But it's also a crisis of inequality – and of an economic system that makes people sick.

We know that a wider gap between rich and poor leads to worse physical and mental health. And we know that working all hours of the day for jobs that pay poverty wages damages wellbeing.

And so the Green Party wants a properly funded NHS and a social care service that's free at the point of use.

But those things alone aren't enough.

We need an economic system that prioritises wellbeing, where targets are set to reduce inequality, not just pursue endless growth.

CARLA

It is easy to see why nurses, midwives, teachers, public transport workers, posties, all of our key workers, want to make their voices heard – why they're calling out the overworking, underfunding and real terms pay cuts that astonishingly means some of them are becoming homeless despite having full time jobs.

Cleaners, engineers, and barristers...are saying enough is enough. Because the conditions they find themselves in just aren't fair.

Working people are taking the really hard decision to walk out of the jobs they love, because they feel they have no choice but to take a stand – yes for their pay but also to safeguard standards of patient care already dangerously eroded, to ensure justice is done, and to make our rail network safe.

Like all of us, these workers, who are keeping our country moving and healthy and educated and connected – deserve decent pay and they also deserve to feel that they can do their jobs properly without being undermined and forced to cut corners by a system that cares more about profit than either them or the people they serve.

Bringing and keeping *our* public services in public hands is at the centre of the Green Party offer. Why?

Because it's practical and it's common sense. And most of all – it's fair.

ADRIAN

The way things are right now – the money and the power in our society are in all the wrong places.

Oil and gas companies flourish – families struggle to pay their bills.

Billionaires get tax cuts – nurses head to food banks.

Rich people are getting richer and everyone else is getting poorer, and more anxious and the new prime minister is – as we suspected – doing everything she can to maintain that status quo. She has doubled down on the Tories' lack of compassion and awareness for people's real life concerns as the cost of living crisis is allowed to continue and gather pace.

This government is nothing short of dangerous.

Whereas, at the Green Party we are in the business of common sense, of practical solutions and of putting people and our planet first.

CARLA

And that's why the people in this room and the millions around this country who have already found their home with us, are gearing up for the next general election. To get more Greens in parliament pushing for the fair action that's so desperately needed during this cost of living crisis and to tackle the climate emergency.

In May we gained a record number of new Councillors, taking seats in Tory strongholds and Labour heartlands. We pulled that off because of our unity, our shared belief in fairness. And our focus on the issues that most impact people's lives – economic inequality and the climate emergency.

We will take that drive and ambition, that shared belief into the next General Election, securing more of the Green MPs this country so desperately needs.

I can say that so confidently because we have a powerful far-reaching network of people, united by their passion to bring about a fairer, greener society, and ready to make it happen. To knock on doors, post leaflets, to be hands-on – delivering for their communities. Without them – without you – our members and supporters, this party couldn't hope to achieve its political goals. But

with you, with us all pulling together, we know it is possible.

ADRIAN

So, parents, and grandmas and teachers and uncles will go on teaching our children about the difference between right and wrong. About not stamping on other people's sandcastles or cheating at monopoly.

And we, by getting Greens elected, can set about changing the rules of the game so that the banker doesn't always win.

Because we think – we know – that for a society to thrive, it has to be fair.

Thank you.

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Tax the richest 1% to pay for better, warmer homes, say Greens



30 September 2022

- Green Party co-leaders announce emergency package to halt and reverse rise in inequality and tackle climate change
- Wealth tax on richest 1% and watertight windfall tax backdated to January would raise £75bn to help improve homes
- Carla Denyer: “It really is not rocket science. The cheapest bill is the one you don't have to pay”
- Adrian Ramsay: “At the Green Party we are in the business of common sense, of practical solutions and of putting people and our planet first”

The co-leaders of the Green Party have called for an emergency package which would raise £75bn to reverse years of damage caused to both the climate and society by successive Tory governments.

As Prime Minister Liz Truss sets out on a climate-wrecking, growth-at-all-costs agenda that will deepen inequality and poison our environment, Green Party co-leaders Carla Denyer and Adrian Ramsay will use their Autumn Conference speech today [Friday] to set out an alternative vision which will create the pathway to a fairer, greener country.

The co-leaders will call for a new emergency tax package which will see both polluters and the richest pay their fair share to enable a nationwide insulation and renewable energy programme that will provide people with warmer, more comfortable homes, bring bills down permanently and reduce inequality.

The package includes a wealth tax on the richest 1% of households, raising at least £70 billion [1], alongside closing the loopholes in the Conservatives' windfall tax on oil and gas companies and backdating it to January 2022 [2]. This 'dirty profits tax' would force the biggest polluters to pay for the damage they cause while protecting everyone else as we transition to a carbon-free future.

Co-leader Carla Denyer is expected to say:

"We've got the leakiest homes in Europe – losing huge amounts of energy through badly sealed windows and poorly lined walls. We could be saving hundreds, thousands of pounds through insulation – reducing energy wastage, cutting bills and emissions. It really isn't rocket science. The cheapest bill is the one you don't have to pay.

"So what's the solution?

"We would introduce – immediately – an emergency tax package which would mean polluting companies and the very richest 1% of households contribute more, to fund a nationwide insulation and renewable energy programme, creating warmer, more comfortable homes and bringing bills down for good.

"Rather than the Tories' feeble Windfall Tax, full of loopholes for the oil and gas industry, our Dirty Profits Tax would raise billions and accelerate the transition to renewable energy."

The wealth tax, based on models from the University of Greenwich, would see the richest 1%, households with £3.4 million or above, pay just a marginal rate of 1%. This would then rise to 5% for those with £5.7 million and above and 10% for those with £18.2 million and above.

The Greens would also close the loopholes in Conservative Party's windfall tax on North Sea oil and gas, announced by Rishi Sunak in May this year, which currently allow companies to escape some of the tax by reinvesting their profits. [3]

The Green Party's "dirty profits tax" [4] on North Sea oil and gas would be used as a stepping stone towards a permanent carbon tax on polluting industries. This policy, which has 94 per cent public support [5], would drive the economy away from fossil fuels and high-carbon industries towards a cleaner country.

Ramsay is expected to say:

"The way things are right now – the money and the power in our society are in all the wrong places.

"Oil and gas companies flourish – families struggle to pay their bills.

"Billionaires rake in millions in interest – nurses head to food banks.

"Rich people are getting richer and everyone else is getting poorer, and more anxious and the new prime minister is – as we suspected – doing everything she can to maintain that status quo. She has doubled down on the Tories' lack of compassion and awareness for people's real life concerns as the cost of living crisis is allowed to continue and gather pace.

"At the Green Party we are in the business of common sense, of practical solutions and of putting people and our planet first."

ENDS

Notes

1. https://gala.gre.ac.uk/id/eprint/33819/20/33819%20TIPPET_The_Case_for_a_Progressive_Annual_Wealth_Tax_%282021%29_v2.pdf
2. The Green Party estimates closing the loopholes of the Conservative government's windfall tax on North Sea Oil and Gas would raise a further £2bn to help provide financial support to households during the economic crisis. The Greens also estimate backdating the windfall tax to January 2022 would raise an additional £3bn.
3. <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/oil-gas-windfall-tax-boost-b2088147.html>
4. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2022/02/08/greens-call-for-dirty-profits-tax/>
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/oct/11/uk-public-backs-carbon-tax-high-flyer-levy-and-heat-pump-grants-study-shows>

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[Greens welcome Labour vote to support](#)

Proportional Representation



26 September 2022

Green Party deputy leader Zack Polanski has welcomed the news that Labour members have voted overwhelmingly to ditch the first past the post system (FPTP) and replace it with proportional representation (PR) at general elections.

Polanski said:

“It’s promising to see Labour members vote overwhelmingly to join with the rest of Europe and embrace modern, fair and proportional elections in the UK. However, it’s disappointing that Keir Starmer appears to remain unmoved by the democratic rights of his own members.

“The Labour leadership needs to honour the wishes of members – as well as a growing number of unions and many Labour MPs – by ending their defence of a broken first past the post system.

“Two party politics is long dead. We are in an era of multi-party politics, particularly for those who support progressive centre-left policies. It is in the interests of both Labour and the majority of the British public for their Party to embrace PR.

“If Keir Starmer does not listen to his members and back PR, it will leave him ensuring future Tory victories.

“We should have done away with the current completely undemocratic voting system long ago. As the former shadow chancellor, John McDonnell said today, ‘we can’t go on like this because the system is so unfair’, while Mark Drakeford, the Welsh first minister, pointed out that PR has worked just fine for Wales.”

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