

Jonathan Bartley calls for investigation into potential breach of special advisers' code of conduct by Dominic Cummings



26 May 2020

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley has called for an investigation into whether Dominic Cummings broke the special advisers' code of conduct by editing a blog post which he claimed predicted the risk of coronavirus.

In the press conference held yesterday in the Downing Street garden, Cummings claimed he had written about "the possible threat of coronaviruses" last year.

It has since emerged that a post on the aide's personal blog from March 2019 appears to have been edited on April 14 this year to include a reference to coronavirus. This was the day he returned to work after self-isolating in Durham. [1]

Bartley has now written to the Head of the Civil Service and Cabinet Secretary Sir Mark Sedwill [2] to ask whether this action would be in breach of the special advisers' code of conduct which states "Special advisers must not take public part in political controversy, through any form of statement whether in speeches or letters to the press, or in books, social media, articles or leaflets." [3]

He has also asked for an explanation about who authorised the press conference, which itself also appears to be a breach of the code.

Bartley said:

"If Mr Cummings has gone back to edit blog posts while he was a special advisor to the Government, to make it appear he was predicting a coronavirus

pandemic last year then that clearly needs investigating.

“This took place while he was taking part in meetings at the highest level to determine the Government policy on Coronavirus and it would appear to be a clear breach of the special advisers’ code of conduct.

“The fact Mr Cummings was given the platform of the Downing Street garden to hold a press conference to try to explain his journey to Durham also raises serious questions over why this was permitted and whether any taxpayers’ money was used.

“There must be clear boundaries to defend the independence of the civil service. It would be wholly inappropriate if any civil servant supported Mr Cummings yesterday.

“There must be an explanation about why the press conference was permitted, who was involved, what resources were used as well as an investigation into whether Mr Cummings himself broke the civil service code.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://twitter.com/faisalislam/status/1265034438645293056>

2

A copy of the letter can be viewed [here](#)

3

Special advisers code of conduct is available to view here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-advisers-code-of-conduct>

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Green MP Caroline Lucas calls for Dominic Cummings to be sacked



25 May 2020

Green Party MP Caroline Lucas has written to the Prime Minister this afternoon calling for the dismissal of Dominic Cummings.

The MP for Brighton Pavilion wrote:

Dear PM,

I am writing to urge you to sack your special adviser, Dominic Cummings, with immediate effect.

My constituents are deeply and rightly concerned by the lack of consistency between the responsibility they have tried to show in complying with the Government's clear instructions on social distancing and Mr Cummings reported actions. Whilst I acknowledge that each and every one of us have had to make difficult, often heart breaking, decisions in the last couple of months since lockdown, a situation in which there's perceived to be different rules for a select, privileged few is untenable, and ultimately dangerous.

Your refusal so far to hold Mr Cummings to account for breaching the guidelines designed to keep us all safe is undermining your Government's public health strategy. The price of your insistent denial and persistent defence of his wrong doing is public trust – and that will have worrying short and long term consequences for our NHS, public safety and economy.

Mr Cummings actions are indefensible, illegal and reckless. Your Government's

response shows utter contempt for so many people who have made sacrifices through this crisis and continue to do so. I therefore call on you to act decisively and to end this trial by media and public opinion, which has seen a young boy in particular brought into the spotlight through no fault of his own, and sack your special adviser, making clear that the rules apply to everyone and that none of your team are entitled to break them.

If this pandemic has taught us anything it's that our country has a huge capacity for compassion and kindness. This scandal is also a reminder of how much we value justice and fairness. It's high time for you to do what's right and take responsibility for Dominic Cummings poor judgement thus far, and insist he does the same.

I look forward to your prompt response, which I will share with my constituents.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline

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Chancellor must guarantee support will continue as long as necessary, say Greens



12 May 2020

The Chancellor has today announced that the government's furlough scheme will be continued for another four months.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said: "We welcome the government's commitment to extending this important scheme, but what we need to see now is a further guarantee that the level of support will not drop and will continue for as long as necessary.

"Nobody should be forced into poverty during a global pandemic yet we already know that the government's job retention scheme does not cover new starters and the self-employed.

"A Universal Basic Income would provide security to all those that need it and ensure workers and employers have greater flexibility in these precarious times."

ENDS

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[**Sian Berry responds to Johnson's address**](#)



10 May 2020

Responding to Boris Johnson's public address 10 May, Sian Berry said:

"We were told we were going to get a roadmap for the way forward today but the Prime Minister's address was ambiguous and confusing. The shift to 'Stay Alert' from 'Stay Home' as a key message, offers absolutely no clarity and leaves people wondering what exactly it is they're being asked to do.

"We said on Thursday and we maintain this evening, that while we understand and share the anxiety to get the economy moving and for people to see their loved ones, easing lock down too soon, which we strongly believe it still is, could lead to unnecessary deaths, a second peak and the overwhelming of the NHS.

"The 'world beating test, track and trace scheme' which Boris Johnson referred to, must be a community shield which we've been advocating for, for weeks.

"The immediate outcry from key unions in the industries affected demonstrates that the implications for worker safety have not been either consulted or properly thought through.

"We are pleased to see the Government finally acknowledging the severity of the situation in care homes and now have expectations of immediate action to provide a clear plan for quarantining and routine testing of staff and residents.

"Staying at home will continue to save lives and protect the NHS so that's the advice, until there's more clarity on what the Government is actually trying to say, that we should be following."

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Green Party calls for emergency fuel duty rise to invest in walking, cycling and public transport



8 May 2020

- Crash in oil prices and concerns over the safety of public transport could see spike in number of people using cars
- Extra revenue from 25p/litre rise to be given to local authorities to spend on, walking, cycling and public transport to enable social distancing
- Caroline Russell: "If we don't act now the fall in global oil prices could mean more driving, traffic jams and filthy air as lockdown is gradually eased and more people begin to travel"

The Green Party has called for an emergency fuel duty rise on petrol and diesel to allow local authorities to support social distancing by improving conditions for walking and cycling and investing in public transport in response to the coronavirus crisis.

The Greens have warned that a crash in oil prices could undermine moves in towns and cities across the country to enable more people to walk and cycle, if it means the price at the pump continues to fall and encourages people to drive more. [1]

Since 2010, successive governments have frozen fuel duty rises year on year. Fuel duty stands at 57.95p/litre, earning the treasury some £28bn a year in revenue [2]. On this basis an extra 25p/litre could raise in the region of £12bn for public transport and active travel.

Green Party transport spokesperson Caroline Russell said the extra revenue could then be allocated to local authorities to invest in measures needed to support social distancing on public transport and on our streets with street

space reallocated from vehicles to people walking and cycling.

Russell said:

“If we don’t act now the fall in global oil prices and concerns about social distancing on public transport could mean more driving, traffic jams and filthy air as lockdown is gradually eased and more people begin to travel.

“It is vital we act to create a healthier future as the ongoing coronavirus crisis makes our lives much more local and the climate emergency needs us to shift to low carbon options.

“An increase in fuel duty after the ten year freeze would generate billions of pounds for local authorities to invest in public transport for essential workers and healthier streets for walking and cycling so people can get to work, take daily exercise and make their local journeys safely while maintaining social distance.”

ENDS

Notes

1

UK petrol prices fell by their largest margin in 12 years in March, triggered by a collapse in the world oil price. In April, the price of Brent Crude dipped below \$20 a barrel and is currently trading at around \$25 a barrel.
<https://www.oilcrudeprice.com/brent-oil-price/>

As the price of crude oil has slumped, the price paid at the pumps has declined drastically and has fallen since early March from around £1.23/litre to £1.05/litre for petrol and from around £1.26p/litre to £1.15/litre for diesel.
<https://media.rac.co.uk/pressreleases/low-oil-price-leads-to-sharpest-drop-in-petrol-and-diesel-prices-in-12-years-2988585>

2

<https://obr.uk/forecasts-in-depth/tax-by-tax-spend-by-spend/fuel-duties/>

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