

Greens to pledge to put land in communities' hands at local election campaign launch



9 April 2019

- * **Green Party set to launch biggest ever local election campaign**
- * **Party will pledge to give communities control of local land**
- * **Jonathan Bartley: "This will be our biggest ever local election campaign – and I've never seen Greens so ready to win."**
- * **Sian Berry: "Green councillors will always work to put land in the hands of communities who know best."**

The Green Party will promise to give local communities the first say on how land in their area is used as it launches its biggest ever local election campaign today.

Sian Berry, co-leader of the Green Party, will pledge to give communities the first chance to buy local land that comes up for sale by extending Scotland's Community Right to Buy policy [1] to England and Wales.

She is expected to say Greens "believe local decisions should be made by the communities that know them best" and that Community Right to Buy would "help bring land back into use where it is being neglected and hoarded by people who are hanging on for profits".

The Green Party will also pledge to give communities and councils the power to stop landowners sitting on or neglecting land by following Scotland's lead and introducing Compulsory Sale Orders [2], enabling abandoned land to be brought back into community ownership.

Berry will make the promises at the launch of the Green Party's local election campaign in Trafford [3], where Greens have helped the local

community save playing fields from being turned into unaffordable housing that wouldn't meet the community's needs.

The Green Party is this year fighting its biggest, strongest local election campaign ever with 2595 candidates standing for election across the country, as the party works towards its ambition to have a Green on every council.

Last year the Green Party elected a record number of councillors onto a record number of councils [4]. Since then it has added to its numbers further with a total of 178 Green councillors now elected across England and Wales.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, is expected to say:

"The Government has failed local communities. While Westminster crumbles and the political establishment tears itself apart, ordinary people are paying the price. Local services have been decimated and the most vulnerable worst affected.

"Up and down England and Wales local Greens are filling the gap. While Conservative and Labour candidates are getting doors slammed on them, more and more people are seeing that Green councillors work in and with communities to win the change they need.

"This will be our biggest ever local election campaign – and I've never seen Greens this ready to win and take us one step closer to having a Green on every council."

Sian Berry, co-leader of the Green Party, is expected to say:

"Across the country local Green councillors are empowering local communities, like here in Altrincham where Greens and the community saved children's playing fields from being turned into unaffordable housing.

"The Green Party believes local decisions should always be made by the communities who know their needs best, and that communities should get first say on how local land is used. That's why today we promise to give communities the right to buy any land up for sale, as well as the power to force landowners to sell neglected brownfield land.

"Green councillors will always help bring land back into use where it is being neglected and hoarded by people who are hanging on for profits – and in the hands of community groups, and parish and town councils who will use them for the common good."

Michael Welton, Green Party candidate for Altrincham, said ahead of the launch:

"Local action to protect our green spaces is at the core of Green Party values. Our councillors will always support groups like the one here at Cow Field. We are fighting to save a place where people of all ages come together to play games, walk the dog or just take time out to relax in nature.

"Green space brings communities closer together and we will work to ensure

that the community in Altrincham can have their say on how local land is used.”

Notes:

1.
<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Rural/rural-land/right-to-buy/Community>
2.
<https://landcommission.gov.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/CS0-Proposal-final.pdf>
3. Green Party co-leaders Sian Berry and Jonathan Bartley will launch the Green Party’s local election campaign at 11am, Tuesday 9 April 2019, in Oldfield Brow Recreation Ground, Stokoe Avenue, Altrincham, Trafford, WA14 4L.
4.
<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2018/05/04/green-co-leader-wins-lambeth-council-seat-in-record-breaking-elections/>

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[Greens stand ready to fight EU elections](#)



4 April 2019

In the wake of the Cooper-Letwin bill passing through the Commons last night,

the Green Party has welcomed the prospect of a longer extension to Article 50 to 'provide valuable breathing space' and allow European elections to take place.

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

"A longer extension would give the country valuable breathing space for more democratic engagement and provide an opportunity for the many millions of people who believe our best future lies in the EU to vote for pro-EU, pro-remain candidates in the European elections.

"The Green Party stands ready to fight EU elections. We plan to use these democratic and proportional elections to mobilise one of the strongest pro-EU movements anywhere on the continent and champion a fairer, greener, more democratic EU.

"A strong vote for pro-European candidates will massively increase the chances of winning a future People's Vote so we can begin to heal our divided communities and our relationship with our EU neighbours.

"Politicians could and should also use this time to address the causes that gave rise to feelings of powerlessness, alienation and being left behind which prompted so many to vote leave in 2016.

"Of course, many will seek to use this period to further ferment hatred. We must be on our guard against the forces that will continue to mislead, misrepresent and undermine our democracy. It is also essential we continue to expose those who lied, cheated and broke the law in the European referendum campaign of 2016."

The Green Party of England and Wales has in recent weeks been preparing for European elections by selecting their list of candidates. The results from each region will be announced over the next two weeks.

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[Green MEP says ditch nuclear jobs in favour of green jobs as costs and dangers of storing defunct nuclear](#)

submarines soar



3 April 2019

The South West's Green MEP, Molly Scott Cato, has said it is time for Devonport to 'move beyond the nuclear age' and transfer hundreds of nuclear submarine and weapons related jobs into jobs supporting the green economy, particularly renewable energy technologies.

The call comes following revelations that Devonport in Plymouth and Rosyth in Fife are storing decommissioned nuclear submarines at a cost to the tax payer of £500m [1]. The Ministry of Defence has been storing the submarines for dismantling, but the disposal has been beset by lengthy delays and spiralling costs.

Two and a half years ago, Dr Scott Cato produced a report which outlining how Devonport could sever its links with nuclear defence but maintain employment by transferring investment into sustainable jobs, making use of the skills and resources available at the base [2].

Molly Scott Cato said:

"The National Audit Office (NAO) has confirmed the dangers and huge costs associated with decommissioning our obsolete nuclear submarines. Nine of the defunct vessels still contain radioactive nuclear fuel.

"It is time to move beyond the nuclear age, end the terrible risks associated with it and stop saddling the UK tax payer with huge costs.

"There are arguments about the UK's nuclear weapons system supporting thousands of high-quality jobs in the UK, including at Devonport in Plymouth. But there needn't be job losses if we ditch our nuclear submarines and defence system. We can sustain thousands of high-quality and skilled jobs – as well as creating many new ones – if we switch those jobs from nuclear defence to green and socially useful work.

"Our climate emergency demands urgent action. The workforce at our nuclear bases have skills that are transferable into working with renewable energy

technologies, and by doing so contribute to tackling climate change. How much better it would be for Devonport to help create a safe and sustainable future than continue down the nuclear path.”

Notes

[1]<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-47792539>

[2]<https://mollymep.org.uk/2016/11/16/devonport/>

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Green Party thanks MEPs as EU parliamentary term ends



29 March 2019

As the current EU Parliament term ends the Green Party has thanked its MEPs for all their hard work to date and reinforced its commitment to continue to fight for a better Europe.

London MEP Jean Lambert and South East MEP Keith Taylor will both retire after serving on the European Parliament for 20 years and nine years respectively. Molly Scott Cato, MEP for the South West since 2014, will stand for re-election in the event the UK takes part in the upcoming EU elections.

Jean, Keith and Molly, along with former Green MEP Caroline Lucas, have published a book recording 20 years of Greens in the European Parliament titled 'Greens For a Better Europe'. [1]

Jonathan Bartley and Sian Berry AM, co-leaders of the Green Party, Amelia Womack, deputy leader of the Green Party, and Caroline Lucas MP said:

“Green MEPs have shown that having a Green in the room can change everything. While the other parties fail to answer the great questions of our time – from Brexit, to the housing crisis or the threat of climate change – Molly, Keith and Jean have been at work making change happen. They have helped craft air pollution laws which saw the UK Government taken to court, forced the Government to publish its Brexit impact studies and improved and defended vital working rights. All while working together with our European neighbours to build a reformed Europe where we can all thrive.

“As we enter the next European election period it’s with great sadness we say goodbye to Keith and Jean as they retire – but we are confident in the knowledge there are Greens across England and Wales ready to fight with Molly for a better Europe. Our brilliant Green MEPs are a formidable force for good in the European Parliament and we will continue to work towards the Europe and Britain we know is possible.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.waterstones.com/book/greens-for-a-better-europe/liam-ward//9781907994883>

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[Green deputy leader backs Monbiot's acclaim of ecocide campaigner](#)



28 March 2019

Green Party of England and Wales deputy leader Amelia Womack [1] backed George Monbiot's championing on Polly Higgins and her efforts to make ecocide a recognised international crime [2].

Womack has worked with the End Ecocide campaign to work to collect a million signatures from across Europe for a European Citizens Initiative, and has spoken at press conferences for the campaign.

Womack said:

"Polly is a pioneer – working to ensure that our planet is protected by clear legislation that would dramatically change the way that business and governments have to operate. Her vision and leadership are inspirational.

"I met Polly in 2013 and she inspired me to write my MSc thesis on Ecocide after reading her book 'Earth is Our Business'. Not only is she an incredible and thought provoking writer, but the vision she outlined for a better planet has stayed with me. She has influenced me politically, outlining how we need a change in policy to press a reset button on our institutionalised environmentally destructive practices. I am proud that the Green Party has followed her lead and embedded ending ecocide into our policies.

"In an era of record temperatures [3], mass extinction and when plastic pollution is entering our food chain, her campaign to end ecocide is more relevant than ever. Her vision is one that will continue to spur on generations of environmentalists, and challenge the operations of governments and business."

Notes

[1] Amelia Womack is the Green party candidate in the Newport West by-election

[2] <https://bit.ly/2V0c02x>

[3] <https://bit.ly/2TACwC2>

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