

Greens invite Michael Gove to fracking sites after tree felling intervention



11 August 2017

The Green Party has written to Environment Secretary Michael Gove to invite him to meet residents in Sheffield who are campaigning against fracking.

The letter follows Gove's intervention to oppose Sheffield Council's controversial tree felling programme [1]. On August 10 Gove wrote to council leader Julie Dore and chief executive John Mothersole to demand an end to the felling of healthy trees.

Whilst welcoming Mr Gove's sudden interest in local environmental concerns in Sheffield, the Green Party has invited the Secretary of State to take a stand against fracking too. Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, has invited Gove to join him on a visit to the region to meet local residents and protesters.

Bartley said:

"Michael Gove's condemnation of the tree felling programme is of course welcome. He should pay tribute to the hard work of local campaigners who have refused to let this issue be ignored. We're glad Gove is standing up for trees but now he needs to stand up against fracking. If he truly cares about the environment, and local residents being steamrolled by those in power, he should oppose the fracking which threatens the local area too.

"I'd be more than happy for Michael to come with me to meet the tireless campaigners who are standing up for their communities, whether it's over the senseless felling of healthy trees or the many risks posed by fracking."

In the letter, Bartley wrote:

"Tree felling isn't the only environmental issue which local residents and Green Party members are concerned about, and where politicians aren't listening to the strength of local feeling. Many of the activists who have

rightly been campaigning to protect the trees of Sheffield have also been protesting the threat of fracking in a number of locations in the vicinity of the city, with many sites ready to begin test drilling very soon. The local community is similarly bitterly opposed to the plans.

"I'm sure you would agree that this will also 'damage our children's rightful inheritance', with fracking poised to industrialise the countryside and make a mockery of our commitment to the Paris Agreement. As such, I wonder if you would also comment on this issue, and express your support for people across Yorkshire who are equally concerned about this affront to 'green spaces and the local environment'?"

Notes:

1. <http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/our-region/south-yorkshire/sheffield/exclusive-michael-gove-demands-end-to-sheffield-tree-felling-1-8694453>

2. Full text of the letter:

Dear Mr. Gove

I was delighted to see your intervention in the ongoing campaign to protect trees in Sheffield. Like you, I am dismayed to see the council carrying out this senseless felling of trees, refusing to listen to the wishes of the local community.

As I'm sure you are aware, the Green Party has been heavily involved with this community campaign since its inception, from local party members, to former party leader Natalie Bennett, to our councillor Alison Teal, who was arrested and faces an injunction merely for taking part in a peaceful protest to protect Sheffield's trees. I am sure they are equally thrilled to see your willingness to stand alongside these residents.

However, tree felling isn't the only environmental issue which local residents and Green Party members are concerned about, and to which politicians aren't listening to the strength of local feeling. Many of the activists who have rightly been campaigning to protect the trees of Sheffield have also been protesting the threat of fracking in a number of locations in the vicinity of the city, with many sites ready to begin test drilling very soon. The local community is similarly bitterly opposed to the plans.

I'm sure you would agree that this will also "damage our children's rightful inheritance", with fracking poised to industrialise the countryside and make a mockery of our commitment to the Paris Agreement. As such, I wonder if you would also comment on this issue, and express your support for people across Yorkshire who are equally concerned about this affront to "green spaces and the local environment"?

To this end, I would like to invite you to accompany me on a visit to one or more of the local fracking sites, where I would be pleased to introduce you to Green Party members, activists and councillors who are passionately and bravely opposing fracking, many of whom are doubtless the same residents who expressed their concerns about tree felling during your recent trip to

Yorkshire.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Bartley

Co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales

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Slaughterhouse CCTV is welcome but long overdue – Keith Taylor MEP



11 August 2017

Responding to the news that the Government is launching a consultation on its plans to introduce mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses across England [1], Keith Taylor MEP, Green Party animals spokesperson, said:

“Greens have been calling for mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses for decades, our membership of the EU has never prevented the introduction of this measure. Today’s announcement is welcome a step, but long, long overdue.

“The devil is in the detail, of which there is little at the moment. To help prevent the cruellest and most pitiless treatment of UK farm animals, as a minimum, the Government needs to ensure cameras are placed in any area of a slaughterhouse where animals are handled, held and killed. The footage must also be held for a reasonable length of time and made available for

independent viewing and monitoring. At the same time, urgent steps are needed to improve and monitor on farm welfare standards too.

“Ultimately, though, it’s worth remembering that no amount of legislation or regulation can ever make the slaughter business cruelty-free.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-40895049>

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[Green Party responds to YouGov ‘ideal parliament’ survey](#)



11 August 2017

The Green Party is renewing its call for the voting system to be overhauled following YouGov’s ideal parliament survey [1], which reveals voters favour having smaller parties better represented in parliament.

A survey of 5000 people found voters would want the Green Party to have an average of 33 seats, compared to the one MP it has now. The results would make the Greens the fourth largest party in parliament, ahead of UKIP with 29 seats and the SNP with 23. The results also revealed UKIP, Labour, Lib Dem and Conservative voters all want to see more Green MPs in parliament.

The Greens have long campaigned for the first past the post voting system to be replaced by proportional representation.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“Our broken and out of date political system is clearly failing to deliver what the country really wants. True democracy isn’t a two horse race where voters feel pressured to vote tactically. Real representation isn’t possible when millions of votes count for nothing. No one should be forced to hold their noses and vote for the least worst option rather than for who they actually believe in.

“The survey results reveal the public believes a strong Green presence in parliament is important, no matter what party they support. Even UKIP voters want to see more Green MPs.

“Electoral reform is well overdue and the Green Party will always fight for a fairer, more democratic voting system that would ensure Parliament looks like the people it is supposed to represent.”

Notes:

1. <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/08/11/what-does-ideal-house-commons-look/>

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[Border chaos a wake-up call for travel post-Brexit warns MEP](#)



9 August 2017

A South West MEP has warned that the travel chaos experienced by thousands of air passengers to Europe this summer is a taste of what is to come post-

Brexit [1]. The delays have been caused by tighter checks at some EU airports. Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West and Green Party speaker on Brexit, says this should serve as a 'wake-up call' for what lies ahead once we leave the EU. She said:

"We were promised that taking back control would lead to less red tape. But what we have seen this summer is the inevitability that greater control of borders will result in more not less bureaucracy and paper work.

"Once Britain leaves the EU, UK citizens will be covered by the same rules as Americans or Australians. This will mean everyone wanting to visit an EU country will likely be required to follow a process similar to applying for a visa, providing personal information including particulars about state of health, any criminal convictions and details of the purpose of travel [2].

"It is ironic that the delays experienced by the British travelling public have been so vociferously lambasted by the Brexit headbangers of the right-wing media [3]. Isn't this exactly what they wanted? To take back control of our borders? Perhaps they naively believed that restrictions on freedom of movement would only apply to people they didn't want to enter the UK, not UK nationals wishing to travel to the continent. Their reaction borders on the ridiculous, and this is another fine mess that Brexiteers are leading us into."

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jul/29/uk-border-customs-chaos-h-it-hard-brexit>
2. <http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/etias-brexit-schengen-area-british-passports-online-visa-a7879876.html>
3. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4748182/EU-border-checks-leave-UK-tourists-queuing-FOUR-hours.html>

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[Green Party calls for radical reforms to Gender Recognition Act ahead of](#)

Brighton Pride



4 August 2017

The Green Party has called for an overhaul of the Gender Recognition Act to give trans people more rights ahead of Brighton and Hove Pride, which runs from August 4 to 6 [1].

The Government Equalities Office announced a review of the Gender Recognition Act on July 23 [2]. The Green Party is campaigning to allow trans youth and non-binary people to obtain legal gender recognition and to remove the medicalisation of the process.

Aimee Challenor, Green Party LGBTIQ+ spokesperson, and Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, will lead the Green bloc at the march on August 5.

Challenor said:

“LGBTIQ+ rights are under unprecedented threat around the world. We must make sure our laws reflect the world around us and make society a more accepting and welcoming place, whether that’s in public, at school or in the workplace.

“When I was at school other kids called me names, pushed me around and threw things at me. The teachers rarely did anything about it and that hurt – it legitimised the behaviour of the bullies and made me think that I wasn’t worthy of respect.

“I’m proud to be marching this weekend and celebrating people like me who don’t ‘fit the mould’. We’re sending a clear message that it’s never acceptable to intimidate, harass or belittle someone because of who they are. It’s time for our flawed and outdated laws to be updated to recognise the rights of LGBTIQ+ people across the UK.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.brighton-pride.org/>
2. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/07/23/green-party-calls-for-new->

[trans-rights-as-government-announces-review-of-gender-recognition-act/](#)

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