

Green Party: We will stand up for free movement



2 June 2017

*** Party points to OBR statistics which show negative economic effect of ending free movement**

*** Lucas wants Britain to retain free movement, and remain a member of the Single Market**

The Green Party will today launch a staunch defence of free movement. Speaking in Sheffield the party's co-leader Caroline Lucas and former leader, Natalie Bennett will defend migrants' contribution to Britain and pledge their support for continued free movement within Europe.

Caroline Lucas, who was one of few politicians to stand up for free movement in the EU Referendum, will say that migration has 'enriched' Britain both culturally and economically. She will slam the other parties for 'failing to make the case for free movement' and accuse the Tories of 'facilitating a race to the bottom on migration' and 'sacrificing our economy on the altar of ending free movement'.

She will point to figures from the Office of Budget responsibility which show that cutting migration to 185,000 (well above the Tories' target) will cost the treasury up to £6bn [1].

A recent study by the London School of Economics has blown apart a number of key myths around migration [2], saying: "Immigrants pay more in taxes than they take out in welfare and use of public services. UK-born individuals, on average, take out more in welfare and benefits than they pay in taxes. So immigrants help to reduce the budget deficit. There is little evidence that immigrants have negative effects on crime, education, health or social housing."

Caroline Lucas is expected to say:

"The Green Party is proud to celebrate free movement and the huge contribution that migrants have made to Britain. It's easy to blame immigration for the lack of school places or GPs but it's also wrong. Free movement has hugely benefited our economy and made our communities richer. The challenge is to ensure we all share those benefits more fairly and equally.

"Free movement enriches and diversifies our communities. A culture that's rich in diversity is exposed to new ways of thinking, new ideas, new languages and new opportunities. It is outward thinking, rather than self-limiting.

"The economic arguments for free movement are strong too. We'd be a poorer country without the taxes EU nationals pay, and the work they do in our hospitals, care homes and councils. Without free movement, there is a very real risk that the economy will not be able to generate enough tax take to support current levels of investment in the NHS or other public services – levels which have already been cut to the bone."

Natalie Bennett, who is herself a migrant from Australia, will say:

"Britain's political culture is awash with migrant-blaming rhetoric. As someone who came to this country from abroad, and is now proud to call it my home, I find it particularly disturbing to see politicians continuing to blame all of this country's problems on migration. We know that cuts to schools, our hospitals in crisis and the housing shortage are the fault of failed government policies, not migrants. Migrants may be a convenient scapegoat for those in power, but the truth is that people coming to Britain from abroad make a huge contribution to our economy and our society."

Notes:

1. <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2016/11/6bn-year-cost-cutting-immigration>
2. <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/ea039.pdf>

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[Caroline Lucas slams Tory chaos on](#)

migration



2 June 2017

Caroline Lucas will today launch a blistering attack on the Tories over the 'chaos' in their migration policy.

Lucas, who will be making a speech in defence of freedom of movement in Sheffield [1], will say that the Tories' migration policy is in disarray after David Davies last night refused to confirm that their net migration policy would be implemented in the next Parliament.

Speaking on Question Time, Davis said:

"That [reducing migration to 10s of thousands] wasn't actually in the manifesto, it was 'we will bring it down', we didn't say, we didn't put a date ... [It's] the aim, yes, but we can't promise within five years, that's the point."

Lucas, who wants Britain to remain a member of the Single Market and retain freedom of movement, will say:

"Behind the Tories hardline rhetoric on migration is the chaos of a policy that's unworkable, economic illiterate and utterly short-sighted. It's not wonder that Ministers are backing away from this foolhardy net migration target.

Lucas will go on to make the positive case from freedom of movement. She is expected to say:

"The economic arguments for free movement are strong too. We'd be a poorer country without the taxes EU nationals pay, and the work they do in our hospitals, care homes and councils. Without free movement, there is a very real risk that the economy will not be able to generate enough tax take to support current levels of investment in the NHS or other public services – levels which have already been cut to the bone.

"If you meet a migrant in the NHS, they're more likely to be treating you,

than ahead of you in the queue.”

ENDS

[1] The event will take place at 10am on Friday 2 June 2017 at Broomhall Centre, Broomspring Lane, Broomhall, Sheffield, S10 2FD

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[Caroline Lucas slams Theresa May's weak response to Trump](#)



2 June 2017

Caroline Lucas, the co-leader of the Green Party, has slammed Theresa May for her ‘slow and timid’ response to Donald Trump’s decision to pull out of the Paris Agreement.

The Prime Minister has not responded in public to the announcement, but her office said she had expressed her ‘disappointment’ to the US President [1].

Caroline Lucas, Green Party co-leader, said:

“Theresa May’s slow and timid response to this reckless and irresponsible announcement by Trump is another sign of her weakness. A true global leader would be condemning the President’s actions, and joining with other European countries to formulate an emergency plan to save the Paris Agreement. Once again we’re seeing a weak Prime Minister failing to stand up tall on the world stage in the face of near-criminal behaviour from one of our closest allies.

“Britain could be leading the way on tackling climate change, and building an economy fit for the future. Instead the Tories are dragging us backwards at home, and stepping back from making an impact internationally. On June 8th people have a chance to elect Green MPs – who will ensure that no Prime Minister can avoid taking the bold action on climate change that’s so desperately needed.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-40128356>

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[Green Party responds to Trump pulling out of Paris agreement](#)



1 June 2017

The Green Party has condemned Donald Trump’s decision to pull out of the Paris climate agreement [1].

Caroline Lucas, Green Party co-leader, said:

“Trump’s recklessness knows no bounds, as demonstrated by this scientifically and economically illiterate decision – meanwhile Theresa May can barely muster the courage to speak to the British public, let alone the President of the United States. Sadly, it is the most vulnerable in the world who will suffer the effects of a dithering and deluded President who has caved in to his fossil fuel cronies.

“Above all, this is yet another sign that as long as environmental issues are treated as secondary, the planet, and all those who live on it, will lose out. Climate change has been sidelined in this election, and it is a shameful state of affairs that, with our climate targets slipping further out of reach and biodiversity in free-fall, the main political parties remain silent.

“But the global movement for climate justice is unstoppable: from the nanas taking on the fracking industry in this country, to the people putting their lives on the line to stop fossil fuel projects across the world – to say nothing of the jaw-dropping costs in solar and wind energy. On the 8th June, the Green Party represents a vote for that movement; for a cleaner, healthier future; and for a Britain that leads the way by investing in the renewable energy that we have in abundance.”

Notes:

1. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/live/2017/jun/01/donald-trump-paris-climate-agreement-live-news?CMP=tw_t_gu

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[Caroline Lucas environment stunt: full speech](#)



30 May 2017

Caroline Lucas, Green Party co-leader, today staged an emergency intervention into the General Election campaign to highlight how the environment has been ignored in the national debate so far.

Caroline's full speech to Parliament Square (check against delivery):

Good morning everyone – and thanks so much for coming down here this morning.

We're here to talk about the environment – a topic that has been sorely missing from the General Election campaign so far.

For those of us in the environment movement, the lack of attention doesn't come as much of a surprise.

Despite "the environment" actually meaning the air that we breathe, the water we drink, and the food that we eat: it's rarely talked about in British politics.

It appears that for some, the environment is a secondary concern – something to be considered once we fix (so-called) more important issues.

But nothing could be further from the truth.

Our prosperity depends on the natural world.

It is the ultimate source of everything we make and use – from food and materials, to the air we breathe.

But it is in crisis.

2016 was the hottest year on record – and the targets set in the historic Paris Agreement will be breached within years unless we act fast.

40,000 premature deaths a year are attributable to air pollution, and thousands of children breath in toxic nitrous oxide fumes on their way to school every day.

Our wildlife and nature are in crisis too: 60% of UK species are in long-term decline, whilst 15% are at risk of extinction.

These are just some of the many environmental challenges we face – and they will all be exacerbated by the 'red tape bonfire' that looks set to follow an extreme and dirty Brexit.

Despite these monumental challenges, there is virtually no discussion of them at all in the general election campaign.

So, today, I have written to Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn to ask them an important question:

Where is your commitment to the environment?

We need to get the natural world back to the heart of this election – not least because of the current approach to it.

Theresa May's Conservative party have been taking donations from big oil, whilst forcing fracking on communities across the UK.

And despite it being a public health emergency, the Tory manifesto mentioned air pollution only once.

Is that really acceptable that after seven years of being dragged through the courts the Government still has no action plan on air quality?

There's not much point in talking about a strong and stable leadership, if we don't have a strong and stable environment.

As for the Labour Party, it has been heartening to see it adopt a more ambitious agenda on climate change.

But it is simply not possible to tackle the climate crisis whilst continuing to support the fossil fuel industry to the tune of £6bn each year.

Or handing out £37bn of taxpayers money to Hinkley Point C – in the full knowledge that wind and solar are now the cheapest way to generate electricity.

That the environment has received such scant attention from both Labour and the Tory's in this election is a shameful and reckless dereliction of the duty they have – not only to the planet- but to future generations, to whom we leave the natural world

Over the last seven years, I'm proud that the Green Party has led the charge in Parliament for environmental protections and action on climate change – and, quite simply, a prosperous, thriving future will be green – or not at all.

From a new Green Investment and Innovation Centre to a new Environment Act, the Green Party has the ideas and policies to create a prosperous, confident and caring Britain.

We sincerely hope that Jeremy and Theresa will respond to our call today, and make sure that in these final days before June 8th: the environment gets the air-time, column inches, and, crucially, the political importance that it deserves.

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ENDS.

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