

Plastics Pact announcement ‘wholly inadequate’, says Green Party deputy Leader



25 June 2019

Responding to the announcement from the UK Plastics Pact that its members will remove eight unnecessary plastic items from stores by the end of 2020 and “actively investigate” a second list of 19 items for sustainable alternatives by six years’ time (1),

Amelia Womack, deputy leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, said:

“Companies produce and sell about 76 kilogrammes of plastic that goes to waste each year in the UK for every woman, man and child in the country.

“Today’s response from industry and retailers is wholly, ridiculously, inadequate and doesn’t address public concern on plastics or effectively protect the environment.”

“Again and again the model of self-regulation has failed. This is one more area in which the government needs to step in with strong action.”

“The Green Party is calling for a ban on all unnecessary single-use plastics. That would address almost all of the throwaway plastics on our high streets.

“It is up to the companies who sell products, and profit from them, to find alternative forms of distribution and packaging and take responsibility for the impact of their actions in our oceans, food chains and landscapes.”

(1) <https://www.itv.com/news/2019-06-25/eight-plastic-items-marked-for-elimination-from-shelves-by-end-of-2020/>

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[Green Party co-leaders reflect on third anniversary of Brexit referendum](#)



22 June 2019

With tomorrow marking the third anniversary of the Brexit referendum, the co-leaders of the Green Party have reflected on two key aspects of the last three years.

Sian Berry said: “Our politics has become entangled in what has been rightly described as Brexit chaos over the past three years.

“We could, and should, have been dealing with the fast-rising issues of poverty and homelessness, with the collapse of bus services and the causes of the filthy air we breathe, with the state of our nature-deprived countryside and the struggles of our small farmers to survive.

“Instead we have been bogged down in party infighting, in fact-free debates about non-existent Brexit options and arcane struggles over parliamentary procedures.”

Jonathan Bartley added: “I’m thinking particularly about our young people.

“It should be a basic aim of politics that young people shouldn’t have fewer freedoms and opportunities than their parents, but if we do Brexit, and lose the treasure of free movement, our young will see their choice circumscribed, their options narrowed.

“More than two million young people have become voters since the 2016 referendum. Well over another million are aged 16 and 17, seeing society wrestling with issues that will have a huge impact on their futures.

“That’s more than 3 million people who deserve a say on their own future through the democratic option of the People’s Vote.

“Parliament has shown itself to be unable to find a way forward. The answer is democracy, and giving those young people the option to have their say.”

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Green MEP says community energy report demonstrates failures of government policy



22 June 2019

Alexandra Phillips, Green MEP for the South East and a champion of the Green New Deal has reacted to today's release by Community Energy England of its annual report on the state of the sector (1).

Alexandra said: "The report describes 2018 as "a year of uncertainty and challenge".

"There's only one source of that uncertainty, the total failure of government policy to engage with the needs of this crucial part of the renewables sector that is also an essential part of strong, resilient local economies right across the country.

"Community energy should be at the heart of the government's policy, but like the whole renewables and energy efficiency sector it has been trapped in an uncertain policy environment, given limited encouragement then all too often had the rug pulled out from under its feet, as with the sudden ending of the feed-in tariff."

"The report says 'very few new community energy projects were developed' last year, despite the fact that this was the year the urgency of our climate emergency became clear.

"Eighty two per cent of people think the government should do more to help communities generate their own energy.

"The government should listen to the people, and the call for the restoration of tax relief on investments in community energy projects made today at the conference.

"Community energy is a crucial part of the Green New Deal – it contributes to tackling the climate crisis, taking people out of fuel poverty and creates secure, local jobs, keeping money circulating in local economies, rather than being swished off into the coffers of giant multinational companies."

Notes

(1)

<https://communityenergyengland.org/pages/state-of-the-sector-report-2019/>

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[Green Party co-leaders back call for 'right to repair'](#)



21 June 2019

Green Party co-leaders Sian Berry and Jonathan Bartley will today jointly be signing the Manchester Declaration calling for a “right to repair” for consumers.

They will be joined by a representative from the Restart movement at the “Library of Things” – a community-focused lending library of useful appliances and tools – in the Upper Norwood Library.

Jonathan Bartley said: “We all know how annoying it is when an appliance that we know used to last for decades dies after a few years, when a new computer won’t work with an older printer, when an expensive kitchen appliance becomes useless for the want of a minor part.

“As consumers, we should have the right to goods made to last, designed so that if an element goes wrong it can be repaired (ideally at home or at a repair cafe), that parts will be available when needed and documentation available to assist the repairer.

“There is no technical reason why this shouldn’t be the case. It is companies seeking to maximise profits, to push sales, that are exploiting us all, and trashing the planet. The governments that should be forcing them to act for the common good, producing a circular economy, are generally failing to act (2).”

Sian Berry added: “We are committing to using our political influence at local, national and EU level to trigger the switch to a circular economy, and fight for our right to repair.

“Planned obsolescence does not benefit the consumer. It certainly doesn’t benefit our planet. The only thing it benefits is the pockets of corporations.

“Up and down the country Green councillors are supporting and encouraging Repair Cafes and Restart Parties. These are great examples of communities getting together, supporting each other, sharing skills, creating environmental benefit, but their work is made unduly difficult by the failure of companies to properly design and make products.”

Notes:

1. <https://manchesterdeclaration.org/>
2. Jonathan will point to the fact that the French government has made it a crime to intentionally shorten the life of a product; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-42615378>

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[Saudi arms sale verdict a 'stunning rebuke' for the government, says Green co-leader](#)



20 June 2019

Responding to this morning's decision of the Court of Appeal on the case brought by the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) against the government over Saudi arms sales, Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, said:

"The Court of Appeal verdict is a stunning rebuke for the government.

"It has failed in a basic legal obligation to make a systematic assessment of the past violations of human rights law, as it should have done before granting export licences.

"The government should also take this opportunity to rethink its whole approach to a regime notorious for its abuses of its own citizens, and actions in Yemen.

"British arms sold to Saudi Arabia are implicated directly in rights abuses. The sales are also making the world a less stable and secure place, threatening all of our futures."

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