

Greens condemn High Court ruling against Sheffield tree protesters



Green Party

15 August 2017

The Green Party is deeply disappointed by today's ruling by the High Court in favour of granting an injunction against tree felling protesters in Sheffield [1].

The injunction was taken out by Sheffield Council against Green Councillor Alison Teal, two other named protestors, and 'persons unknown'. It is aimed at preventing peaceful protesting against the council's tree felling programme.

The ruling means that campaigners will not legally be permitted to continue standing up for Sheffield's trees and local residents by preventing the felling of healthy trees.

Cllr Teal has vowed to continue opposing the council's plans, despite the injunction, and expressed dismay at the council's heavy-handed tactics.

She said:

"I am very disappointed with this outcome, but will continue to do all I can to save Sheffield trees. Sheffield Greens will not stop standing up for Sheffield residents and communities who do not want this disastrous and unpopular tree felling programme to continue. In the short term, we will of course be looking into possible avenues of appeal against this decision.

"It never had to come to this. The council says that this action was a 'last resort', but in truth they have wasted time and taxpayers' money on this needless, aggressive action when all they had to do was acknowledge residents' concerns and to mediate.

"In this, the case of Sheffield City Council vs The People, it is democracy and the residents of Sheffield who have lost. This decision by the high court is very worrying, as the right to peaceful protest has been fundamentally threatened.

"The council's disastrous and unpopular tree felling programme continues to be a story of national and international embarrassment for our city."

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“This ruling is deeply disappointing. Alison and the other protesters have shown nothing but integrity and courage in the face of a council determined to plough ahead with an ecologically illiterate and ill-considered tree felling programme.

“The council’s plans are nothing less than environmental vandalism. This is a move by an authoritarian Labour council that knows it has lost the argument and so is attempting to shut down debate. The Green Party will continue to stand with Alison and the residents of Sheffield who oppose the destruction of perfectly healthy trees. Peaceful protest is a fundamental right and an integral part of a healthy democracy.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/tree-fight-will-continue-despite-injunction-ruling-say-sheffield-campaigners-1-8703673>

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[Green Party responds to inflation figures](#)



Green Party

15 August 2017

The Green Party has responded to the latest inflation figures [1], which reveal inflation has held steady at 2.6 per cent in July. However the retail price index has climbed to 3.6 per cent, meaning rail fares will rise by 3.6 per cent in January 2018 – the highest increase in fares in five years [2].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“This Government is caught like a rabbit in the economic headlights,

paralysed and without a credible plan about what to do. The latest inflation figures will be little comfort to those who are struggling to feed their families and pay their rent. The cost of living is rising while wages are stagnating and the threat of Brexit continues to hang over the country's head.

“Meanwhile all the Government appears to want to do is push ahead with its scattergun approach. Its blind allegiance to credit fuelled and largely illusory growth will do little to raise living standards and a lot to exacerbate the very problems it should be addressing.

“The Green Party is the only party talking about making the right choices and bringing about the shift in power and sustainable, transitioned economy we urgently need. Workers and small business should be empowered and we must embrace bold new ideas like a universal basic income, which would provide security and opportunity, and a shorter working week, to redress the imbalance in our economy.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.ft.com/content/883dbbfe-33f1-3766-bc93-74d7630468de>
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/aug/15/commuters-brace-for-steep-pest-fare-rise-in-five-years-as-uk-inflation-rises-to-36>

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[MEP slams government for hiding over 50 secret studies on Brexit impact](#)



Green Party

14 August 2017

Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP and Brexit spokesperson for the Green Party, has slammed the government for refusing to publish 50 or more studies they have undertaken into the impacts of Brexit.

Dr Scott Cato wrote to Brexit secretary David Davis MP [1] after hearing of alleged 'secret studies' by the government into the potential impact of a hard Brexit. One study, undertaken by the Department of Health suggests that a hard Brexit could result in a shortage of more than 40,000 nurses by 2026 [2]. A response, from Minister of State David Jones MP, stated that the government had "conducted analysis of over 50 sectors" but did not offer to share any findings.

After receiving the 'unacceptably evasive response' [3] from the minister, Molly Scott Cato said:

"The only reason they wouldn't publish these studies is because they reveal what they don't want people to hear: that a hard Brexit will be a disaster for our economy, for our environmental standards and for our workers' rights.

"I wrote to David Davis to highlight some of the deep concerns around the uncertainties facing the South West of England. I wanted to know what studies the government has commissioned on the impact of a hard Brexit on the livelihoods of the people living in this region, especially in regard to agriculture. What I got in response were platitudes and further evasion. This is completely unacceptable.

"We know this government has undertaken studies, including the leaked Department of Health research that shows how our nursing provision will be devastated by a hard Brexit. We don't know what other studies the government have done because they won't tell us, but we do know they have carried out analysis of over 50 sectors.

"It is time for the government to come clean and tell us what the results of these studies were. If they don't, it will just fuel the growing uncertainties and concerns people have over this government's hard Brexit folly."

Notes:

1. <http://mollymep.org.uk/2017/04/12/disclose-impact-studies-of-hard-brexit/>
2. <https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/workforce/dh-leak-reveals-worst-case-brexit-scenario-for-nursing/7017178.article>
3. <http://mollymep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Exiting-the-EU-letter-from-David-Jones.pdf>

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Greens call for ban on grouse hunting as shooting season opens



Green Party

12 August 2017

The Green Party has called for a ban on grouse hunting as shooting season opens [1] and an end to government subsidies for grouse shooting estates [2].

The UK government spends millions of pounds subsidising the grouse shooting industry, which is harmful to the environment and other wildlife [3].

Grouse shooting season officially opens on August 12 across the UK.

Amelia Womack, Green Party deputy leader, said:

“Killing for fun has no place in a decent society. But grouse shooting is even worse, because it also has a detrimental impact on the environment and other animals. We should ban grouse shooting immediately. Or at the very least, the government should end subsidies for moor estates. Throwing money at a cruel activity that is almost solely a pursuit of the rich is outdated, wasteful and disgraceful.

“Not only is it bad for wildlife, but it’s bad for human society too. The Green Party has long warned that grouse shooting threatens other wildlife and over-managed grouse shooting estates contribute to flooding [4] as well as being a cruel sport which damages the environment. We simply cannot continue to let such large areas of land be destroyed for the brief enjoyment of a very small group of elites.

“We can end the injustice of grouse shooting. Michael Gove has promised a green Brexit, where farmers will only get payouts if they agree to protect the environment and enhance rural life [5]. Grouse shooting estates tick neither of these boxes and we’re calling on Gove to recognise this. When he reshapes subsidies for agriculture during the Brexit negotiations, the payouts for grouse shooting estates must be cut. It’s cruel, it’s unfair and it’s ecologically disastrous. Grouse shooting must end.”

Notes:

1. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/glorious-12th-what-is-it_uk_598b160ee4b0a66b8bb0471d

2. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/oct/28/grouse-shooting-estates-shored-up-by-millions-in-subsidies>
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/aug/11/grouse-moors-to-blame-for-scotland-disappearing-raptors-birds-prey-glorious-twelfth>
4. <https://www.businessgreen.com/bg/opinion/2441942/why-grouse-shooting-is-increasing-the-uks-flood-risk>
5. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-40673559>

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[Greens invite Michael Gove to fracking sites after tree felling intervention](#)



Green Party

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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