

Greens send letter to the city to encourage all to hear Extinction Rebellion warning



8 October 2019

Green MP and Mayoral candidates Carla Denyer and Sandy Hore-Ruthven have issued a letter to the people of Bristol today, calling on the city to face up to the climate crisis.

The letter is in support of the peaceful climate protests being launched today by Extinction Rebellion, taking place in London and in cities around the world.

Greens in Bristol will be joining the action in solidarity, while advocating bold political action to address the climate crisis on Bristol City Council, in the West of England, and in Westminster.

The letter reads as follows.

“Bristol,

We need to face up to the truth. We are currently on track to see over 3°C warming within most of our lifetimes. Already, we’ve witnessed a change in Bristol’s weather, but across the globe people are suffering the consequences of extreme storms, droughts and sea level rise. These problems are only going to get worse and the effects will be felt disproportionately by the poorest. How we respond to this crisis depends on us all. It is not too late to avert the very worst effects. The changes we need to make are unprecedented, but through innovation and persistence we can deal with climate chaos. Bristol can lead the way. Will you join us in recognising this crisis?

In spite of it all, we face this challenge with hope. Bristol is resilient and bold, and we have within ourselves the resources to solve this. Many of the changes we need to make will even benefit our city – better public transport, warm homes and new green jobs. We are committed as future leaders in the city to putting the necessary steps in place to meet the crisis face on. It is something we all have to do together. Join us in heeding Extinction Rebellion’s message and in supporting peaceful actions already being promoted by the Greens and others to help our city change.

Yours sincerely,

Carla Denyer (Green MP candidate for Bristol West) and Sandy Hore-Ruthven (Green Mayoral candidate for Bristol)”

Carla Denyer has been invited to travel to London to speak at the rebellion this weekend, further details to be confirmed shortly.

Both candidates also offered to meet with residents or community groups to discuss their concerns or hear their suggestions for what Bristol should do to respond to the climate emergency.

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[Sian Berry, candidate for London mayor, speech to Autumn conference, Newport, 2019](#)



6 October 2019

Good morning.

I am going to get straight to the point today.

I want to invite you all to London, to my home and my city. I want to invite you to join a team that's ready to win.

Campaigning in London is the best.

Londoners are so ready to vote Green they are delighted when we knock on their doors.

They all want a chat, they all have good ideas for how to change things, and they all like our ideas too.

And for those of you who enjoy leaflet delivery. All our garden gates are easy to open, all our lifts are working, all our dogs are friendly and all our letterboxes are above floor level!

First I want to say a few things about the London we could have had by now.

If a Green Mayor had taken over from Boris Johnson in 2016, and not Labour and Sadiq Khan.

We'd have cancelled the Garden Bridge straight away. We would not have supported, then reviewed and then dithered over Boris Johnson's waste of a vanity project like our current Mayor.

We would have saved tens of millions of pounds for London.

We'd have cancelled the £1 billion Silvertown road tunnel vanity project too, which our current Mayor still supports, saving tens of millions more in its costs so far.

These tens of millions could have been spent on many things, for example... avoiding bus cuts.

Bus cuts? In London? Now that wasn't in Sadiq Khan's manifesto, but they are happening and they would never be happening with a Green Mayor.

London's private renters. (That's me too, I rent, that's most Londoners these days.) We private renters would not have had to wait nearly three years for anything to be done on rent controls.

Meanwhile, with rents rising – above inflation again and again – we have been overpaying our landlords for years, and this adds up.

Oh it adds UP.

London Greens have sat down and worked this out. Today I can reveal that, in just six years, London's private renters have overpaid our landlords by £11 billion pounds.

That's not the total rent we've paid, that figure is over a hundred billion pounds.

£11 billion pounds is just how much EXTRA we have paid compared with if our rents had gone up with inflation since 2012. That is just the excess profits our landlords have collected. So no wonder we are struggling.

And no wonder I am so frustrated at our current Mayor for going so slow on this campaign for these vital powers to control our rents.

With a Green Mayor this work would have started on day one.

What else would we have had with a Green Mayor?

We'd have had a bigger, smarter Low Emission Zone already in place across all of London, not just to the north and south circular roads. A Green Mayor cleaning up the air for all Londoners now, not from 2021.

We would not have had the creeping, lawless, and secret rollout of facial scanning by police.

On our estates I would have given residents the power to vote down unwanted demolition plans straight away.

Unlike the current Mayor, I wouldn't have delayed. And unlike him I would NOT have let councils off, helping them slip under the wire of a new ballot policy, to deny residents on 36 estates the power to decide their future.

That's thousands more Londoners who would have been given power by a Green

Mayor to have a final, binding say over the demolition of their homes.

And do you know what else a Green Mayor would never have done?

A Green Mayor, unlike Sadiq Khan, wouldn't have dreamed of telling Extinction Rebellion to let London 'return to business as usual' like he did.

That statement says it all. 'Business as usual' is the problem, and it's climate protesters who are the solution, Mr Mayor!

And one more thing. Would we have waited for two years for funding from a Green Mayor to combat the cuts in youth services? No, I made a promise to young people in 2016 to help and I would have kept it without delay.

But even though I was sadly not elected Mayor back in 2016, our group of Green Assembly Members has made a huge difference to Londoners' lives since then.

We've shifted the agenda with our good ideas and the effective way we work.

Caroline and I work, as a team, on the principles and values of listening to Londoners and bringing the voices of people who are ignored and marginalised into City Hall. I'm really proud of that.

Together, we have held this Mayor to account.

On climate change, on crime, on human rights, on healthy streets, on support for young Londoners, on community-led housing we've shifted the Mayor – and the Assembly – to put real money in and be much more radical.

And on renting rights, we've used our political weight to shift the Mayor, kicking and screaming, a LONG way from where he started.

After I gave him the harshest grief before Christmas last year for going slow on rent controls, the Mayor has finally come out and promised to push the Government on this. Something he's literally been dismissing for years in our debates.

We have made our mark, but we have so much more to do. We now have the chance to shift London politics really seismically next year.

And the growing climate chaos says we must.

The Conservatives want to frack our fields and hills against our wishes.

They want to build a new motorway across England, and won't invest in walking and cycling.

They want to build HS2 while refusing to bring our railways into public hands under local public control.

But Labour do not yet get it either. They fall short and water down so much of their progress when they face the real decisions.

Their national policies on aviation, especially Heathrow, HS2, the oil and gas industries, the niggling top-downness of their climate measures, the sponsorship of their conference events by oil companies.

Yes, the growing noise on climate change, from elected Greens across the country passing emergency motions, to the young people and campaigners putting their bodies in the way calling for urgent action, have forced Labour to change, but they still have a way to go to catch up with the Greens.

And at home in London the Mayor is also falling short on preventing climate chaos.

In 2016 he promised to be the Greenest Mayor Ever.

But would the Greenest Mayor Ever build a £1 billion four-lane road through two of our most polluted boroughs?

No, he cannot back the Silvertown road tunnel and hold his head up in Green company.

And would the Greenest Mayor Ever back expansion at Gatwick Airport and at City Airport?

Would he let Transport for London – our biggest electricity user by far – buy just one thousandth of its energy from renewable sources?

No, with these stains and holes, the Mayor's climate clothes are only fit for the recycling bin.

Ask yourselves, who can you trust to make London a carbon neutral city in time for the deadline that science gives us?

A go-slowly Mayor who builds roads and backs airports, or a realGreen Mayor?

Conference, we have talked this weekend about the big constitutional changes we need. About bringing power back to the people.

About how this is essential to fix the interlocking crises we face.

And in London, no Mayor can ignore the democratic hole, the destructive virus at the heart of our city.

I'm talking about the City of London, the financial centre of our capital, the impact it has on the world, and the undemocratic way it is governed.

The City of London Corporation needs reform. It's needed it for decades, and only a Green Mayor will stand up and talk about this.

Remaking the City of London is something the Mayor of London could and should be leading on, but every other party is silent on the corporate monsters lurking in the towers that loom over us from across the river.

I will get stuck in and make the strongest possible case for a revolt against London's ancient feudal state, where the businesses not the residents get to

vote, and a revolution in the climate chaos-enabling industries it houses.

It is long past time that the City of London Corporation was abolished.

It needs to be a borough like any other. With its higher functions, like policing, and its huge assets, brought into the Greater London Authority.

This would fix our constitutional anomaly, and give Londoners the ability and the mandate to set a new strategy to make the City and financial services work for us, not the other way round.

A strategy to focus more police resources and effort onto financial crime, illegal trading, and money laundering, and fraud across London.

To work with the most ethical and forward thinking experts in the City to plan the financial tools we need to finance a full scale Green New Deal.

To push forward the widespread divestment from fossil fuels that we need for our future security.

To set new goals for financial services to support climate action, and climate justice around the globe – to stop undermining it and exploiting the people of the global south and their resources.

To stop bailing out banks that are ‘too big to fail’ and get the City working with the City...

...to help us set up a public Bank for London that helps create the resilient local economy we need, backing small business and green industries to grow, while helping Londoners bank ethically and save for the future.

Because let me be clear. We cannot claim to care about climate change while our capital is still the epicentre of finance for fossil fuels, and we cannot have a fair economy that is based on the profits of megabanks or the balance sheets of oil firms and arms companies.

And we cannot rebalance the UK’s economy, and spread wealth to every corner of these islands, if we don’t deal with the engine room of climate chaos at the centre of our biggest city.

It will take a Green Mayor to take this task on.

And, conference, a Green Mayor would use the powers we currently have in the GLA to win more constitutional rights for London too.

Working with London’s MPs and Councils, I would make a plan to introduce new legislation in Parliament to give London’s representatives more rights over how we run our city.

At the simplest level, the right to bring in new road safety rules, default speed limits, road signs and crossings, not controlled by the Department for Transport’s old fashioned ideas and without having to submit for new legislation each time.

At the transformative level, the right to have a Londonwide landlord register and rules, and set limits on rents in our uniquely out of control housing market.

And make our own Clean Air rules, covering all the sources of pollution not just the vehicles.

And at the strategic level, we need the right to choose our own unique planning rules, unfettered by the Government's terrible national planning policies.

To be exempt from Conservative measures created to please big developers, like eroding the Green Belt, those dodgy definitions of 'affordable', and permitted development rights, which have let developers convert our office blocks into the slums of the future, with homes as small as a car parking space that no family could live in healthily.

These constitutional rights for London might sound abstract. But the redistribution of power and decision-making must be at the heart of any genuinely forward thinking politics.

It matters. It means people having control over issues that affect them, it means communities working together, it means working with MPs and councils and grappling power away from the Cabinet and into Londoners' hands.

No London Mayor has yet made real use of section 77 in the GLA Act 1999, which gives us the ability to place our own bills before Parliament "for any purpose which is for the public benefit" of our citizens.

If laws need to change, if power needs to be shifted, all of us who work as campaigners know it's no good just asking nicely.

We need to use every tool we have to get things right for Londoners, and as a Green Mayor I would stand up for our city in every way I can, in Parliament too.

And conference I WISH I could express in words how ready London Greens are for this election.

I'm going to try.

I have been your Green Party candidate for Mayor twice before. in 2008 and 2016.

Each time there was a change of Mayor and a close battle. Each time a real threat to the Green vote and our Assembly Members.

But each time we've fought through this to get noticed,

fight a serious campaign, and got our message through with a clear mission and a great team.

And each time, our votes have gone up and our vote share too.

In 2008 we went from 7th to 4th, in 2012 Jenny Jones took us to third place, and in 2016 we added to our 3rd place lead over the Liberal Democrats.

BUT I have NEVER stood for Mayor as a sitting Assembly Member

AND I have NEVER had the chance to stand when there was NOT a two party squeeze.

This time we have a politics more fragmented than ever before. The Tories are weak, ridiculously divided, and losing all credibility in the disgrace and shambles of their government of the country. And putting up an Assembly Member who isn't up to the job.

Sorry Shaun Bailey, but Green Assembly Members have been the best opposition in City Hall for decades, I've been the Shadow Mayor these past three years, and you SHOULD be worried.

Apart from us, Londoners have some poor choices in 2020.

Between Bad with Bailey

Far from OK with Khan

Not 'Better (or any different) with Benita'.

And Random with Rory

It is clear that the change London needs is Green, and our record proves London is Best with Berry.

And conference I also want to say I've NEVER – been so excited about our London Assembly candidates.

They are amazing, hardworking, wonderful people.

Stand up

Peter Underwood

Scott Ainslie

Tim Kiely

Benali Hamdache

And of course my amazing existing colleague in the Assembly, Caroline Russell.

Also Hannah Graham, Andree Frieze, Pippa Maslin, Shahrar Ali, Zack Polanski, Jarelle Francis, Kirsten de Keyser and all the others too across London.

These people are the Londoners who will make a Green London, a fair London, a

London where every citizen is listened to, a reality.

We are all ready to welcome you all to our campaign. And together what a team we'll have!

Conference.

The climate emergency can't wait.

The problems that led to Brexit need to be fixed now.

London urgently needs a new champion.

Because without big thinking, and big, transformative changes to the way we do things, the young people out on our streets and living on our estates are right: our future is broken.

I will unbreak London's future with the urgency the task deserves.

Unfix the housing market

Unwreck our climate

Uncrush our communities

Reclaim our streets

Restore our homes and environment

Renew our rights, Revive our democracy, and

Recapture London's heart and spirit

Londoners can trust us to do all of this with more Green Assembly Members and a Green Mayor.

London Greens are ready to welcome you all to help us win.

We have no choice but to get to a different place by 2030...

But we can't get there unless we start now, in 2020, with a Green Mayor.

The Green Wave is ready to come to London!

Thank you.

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Young Green Co-Chairs (Rosie Rawle and Thomas Hazell) speech to Autumn Conference, Newport, 2019



5 October 2019

Good afternoon, conference.

There has never been a more exciting time to be addressing conference as Young Greens co-chairs.

Across the globe, young people are rising up.

Last month, from China to Uganda, Fiji to Romania, Nigeria to right here in the UK, more than four million people took part in the global strike for climate justice in all four corners of the world.

Together they were all part of the largest climate mobilisation in history.

And at the forefront, leading the charge were the schoolchildren who have taught us all so much about what it means to fight for a better world.

It's young people like the unstoppable Greta Thunberg who will go down in history as the 21st century's greatest heroes.

But it isn't just the school strikers who are leading the way.

It is young people who have been leading the divestment movement in our universities.

Their bold and inspiring action has taken us so far. In 2012, not a single university had committed to end their financing of the fossil fuel industry.

Now – today – half of all UK universities have cut their ties to fossil fuels, taking a phenomenal £12 billion out of the most morally, environmentally and socially bankrupt industry on this planet.

What an incredible achievement.

And in the battle against exploitation and economic injustice – again, we see young people at the centre.

In the worker's rights movement when the bandit capitalists and the money grabbing bosses – we're looking at you Deliveroo – try to get away with paying a pittance and stripping people of their rights, it is young people who have got organised and have fought back.

These inspiring social movements, and many others like them, are shining examples of how young people are speaking truth and making change in the streets, their schools, campuses, workplaces and communities.

And in the Young Greens we back them. From supporting school strikes to standing up for democracy, we stand shoulder to shoulder and we're fighting for change.

We are organising! We will not, we cannot, sit down and let our futures be stolen.

And we've been working for change at the ballot box too.

In the last year alone, the Young Greens mobilised Young Greens to over 20 action days in support of Green candidates the length and breadth of England and Wales.

That was over 700 volunteer hours given to get Greens elected into council chambers.

And it's work paid off. Hours of hard work from Young Greens not only played a key role in the party's record local election results, but from Bury to Brighton, Norwich to Devon it also helped get 7 fantastic Young Green councillors elected.

There's now a record number of Young Greens sit on councils at all levels.

And when Young Greens get elected they really make a difference.

We've seen that in been Brighton and Hove, where three Young Green councillors now sit in the chamber after May's local elections.

Councillors Hannah Clare and Martin Osborne were instrumental in ensuring the council supported the city's youth strikes and allowed its workers to strike in solidarity. Councillor Amy Heley has held the Labour to account on their environmental action as the Greens' climate emergency lead.

We applaud them.

And Nannette Youssef and Jamie Osborn in Norwich, Sabrina Poole in Cirencester, Jo Norton in Mid-Devon, and Robert Nixon in Bicester were all successful in getting their councils to declare a climate emergency.

Having Young Greens in the room makes a difference.

But while these examples show how valuable a Green voice is, much of our politics won't be making many of us cheerful at the moment.

And that's especially true for young people.

Conference, the world's political leaders are gambling away our futures.

Policy after policy stamps down on our generation.

Politicians fail to act on the climate crisis. We have just eleven years left to avoid the worst effects of climate change. Eleven years.

And yet if you looked to the government, you'd think we had eleven centuries.

The Tories are continuing on the path of ever more fossil fuel extraction, made easier by government subsidies.

They're still planning to add a third runway at Heathrow, despite Boris Johnson's promise to lie down in front of bulldozers to stop it from happening.

And their dogma of austerity and privatisation has left us with a crumbling, de-regulated public transport system, where shareholders make millions, the public pays through the roof, and the planet suffers the consequences.

This is wrong. This is dangerous. And to borrow from Liz Truss, this is a disgrace.

Our own government threatens our rights, freedoms and livelihoods with a disastrous no-deal Brexit.

Time after time the Brexiteers have proven they don't care about young people.

We voted overwhelmingly to remain, yet we will lose so much: the Erasmus program, the freedom to live and work in 27 other EU countries, visa-free travel, interrail passes, and so much more.

Millions of us people, like me, who weren't 18 at the time of the referendum will lose out as a result of a decision we couldn't even take part in.

Disastrous education reforms have left young people with a limited curriculum and bigger classes in poorly funded schools.

English students can no longer receive the Education Maintenance Allowance which enabled many to access further education.

And of course, our universities now leave young people graduating into a world saddled with a £50,000 of debt because Nick Clegg and the Liberal Democrats jumped into bed with the Tories at the first sign of power.

All around the world, right wing politicians like Johnson, Trump, and Bolsonaro preach fear and hatred.

Migrants are branded unwelcome and our own home secretary celebrates the end of freedom of movement.

This is the language of hate and division. It's dangerous and it's deadly.

Conference, it is against this backdrop that we're speaking to you today.

Against this backdrop it's clear that the Green Party is more important than ever.

We're committed to fighting for a fairer future, from inside and outside the ballot box.

We'll fight for a people's vote, and we'll fight to remain in and reform the European Union. We demand freedom of movement, and not just inside the EU. We say abolish the Home Office and all that it stands for.

We'll fight for housing justice for our generation, with a Living Rent through rent controls, renter's unions, and mass social housing programmes. We won't stand for homelessness.

We'll fight for a fairer working world. It is high time for a genuine, real living wage for everyone, regardless of age. And yes that includes apprenticeships and internships. Equal pay for equal work.

We'll fight for free, fair and liberatory education. Reinstating the Education Maintenance Allowance to England, introducing full, living university grants and an end to student debt and tuition fees.

And Conference, we stand fully behind mandatory LGBTIQ+ inclusive sex education. There is no age appropriateness to learning about love. And we need proper, mandatory sex and relationship education which must place front and centre consent.

We'll fight for a global Green New Deal. Environmental justice cannot be achieved if we leave social justice behind. That means rapidly transforming our economy while ensuring we build good, decent, living wage, unionised, sustainable green jobs here in the UK and also throughout the whole of our supply chains.

We'll fight tooth-and-nail against the hollowing out of local government, and for pioneering programmes of municipal socialism. Think housing and utility co-operatives, reclaimed public land and locally-run transport. In every town and city across the country.

And we'll fight for freedom from oppression. Conference, hatred in all its forms – racism, transphobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia, sexism, Islamophobia, ableism and biphobia – are wrong, and we must stamp them out whenever and wherever they rear their ugly heads. Trans men are men, trans women are women, and non-binary identities are valid. We will fight for this to be recognised within and without our party.

And finally, we'll fight to ensure young people are heard, calling for not just votes at 16, but seats in parliament too.

Conference, this is our radical, green and just vision for the future. That is the world we want to live in. And we'll keep on fighting for it.

Because throughout history, when people have come together to fight for a better world, they've won it.

Whether it's the suffragettes, or the Chartists, the people who gave their lives at Peterloo, or those who fought apartheid in South Africa – time and

time again people have shown that when they come together to fight injustice they can overcome all the odds, and shape the future.

And Conference the odds are stacked against us. But from the climate crisis to Brexit, austerity to discrimination, we are on the right side of history. Let's work together to make our future. Let's work together to make history.

Thank you conference, solidarity!

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[Deputy Leader Amelia Womack speech to Swansea autumn conference 2019](#)



5 October 2019

On the 8th of October 2018, the UN gave us a clear warning that we have just 12 years to tackle the climate emergency.

Here we are a year almost to the day since that report was published. So conference, in this speech I am going to cut the nice introductions – because there is no more time to waste.

We don't have time for a joke Prime Minister who wastes his conference speech talking about CDs by Jason Donovan, or to watch Jacob Rees-Mogg lying down on the job while the future of the country is at stake.

Unlike Mogg we will be standing up for our future and our democracy.

Because like me, I know that every one of you shares the sense of urgency for a fundamental overhaul of a broken social and economic system

One that has inflated inequality

One that has abandoned people to political failure

And one that has failed our planet.

When I was a young girl, growing up in this city, I heard about the damage that humanity was having.

I never believed it would come to this. Glaciers now not just vanishing – but gone; The Great Barrier Reef not just bleaching – but 50% dead; the Amazon, that I so often thought about in wonder – burnt for agriculture and meat.

So although through the eyes of a child it was plain to see the urgent need to end this destruction, successive government either failed to see it or simply didn't care.

We can't keep allowing government after government to fail us and our futures.

Now is the time for vision and ambition.

We have come so far over the last few years and now we need to be serious in our ambitions to deliver action both locally and nationally...

It is time for us to build a Green Government.

This clearly won't happen overnight, but our actions now are putting the foundations in place.

And we will build a Green Government on those foundations – because our country and planet demands nothing less right now.

A green government would have science and evidence – not money – at the heart of its policies.

– Using the internationally tested Housing First policy to reduce homelessness, along with introducing rent caps and longer tenancies.

Because we all deserve a roof over our heads.

– Using science to lead our understanding of how we can reduce the impact of the climate emergency.

– Using evidence-based approaches to drugs policies.

Rather than criminalising drug users we need to start treating addiction as a health issue.

Because know as Greens that we have the best policies.

For the last 35 years the Greens have been leading on a vision of a system that is fit for the demands of the 21st century.

We need a Green government.

Because not only have the Tories, Lib Dems and Labour failed in government to deal with the escalating environmental emergency, they've let us all down in so many other areas too.

– Labour's PFI contracts led to the backdoor privatisation of the NHS.

– The Lib Dems stood on a promise that they wouldn't increase tuition – and

then swiftly introduced sky high fees.

– And the Conservatives. Those in Government today. Not only have they rolled out an austerity programme that has hit the poorest hardest.

Not only have they forced record numbers of families to use foodbanks.

They have taken away the safety nets which has resulted in a huge increase in homelessness and people are dying while sleeping rough on our streets.

And every single one of those deaths, every single one, must be seen as a tragedy that could have been prevented.

And now they are planning tax cuts for the rich and big corporations.

The party of Government right now isn't just a Rees-Mogg or Johnson joke – they are the cruelest, most vindictive ministers that have sat around the cabinet table in modern British History.

This is why we now need local and national Green Governments that will overhaul this broken economy.

From council elections, Mayoral elections, Welsh Assembly election, these are important and powerful campaigns and building blocks to that ultimate ambition.

We know how to win elections.

We know how to rewrite the rules and win in places that others simply didn't expect.

This is only possible because of you.

Because of each and every one of you – out leafleting, on doorsteps canvassing and getting the message out there.

Because we know the power of each Green vote, we know the power of voting for what you truly believe in.

We know the power of Greens when they are elected. Just one Green can change the game – but collectively we can achieve anything.

If you haven't already, you need to get selecting so that we have the best group of candidates ever.

And as I travel the country now I'm already meeting so many talented and inspiring candidates.

As a party with equality at our heart, then please remember to support and encourage diverse candidates to stand, because we need more women and more people of diverse genders, fewer people from private school, more working class people, a better cross section of ages, people with different abilities and more diversity of colour in our politics and in our parliament.

But also, don't forget to prepare for a People's Vote.

It's vital that we continue to demand a final say on Brexit.

I know that as we speak dedicated people are using every power we have as a democracy to protect us from the potential Brexit damage. But also as we speak the Prime Minister is using every power HE has to subvert our democracy.

So let's be real for a moment. The next few weeks and months will be an almighty struggle. Staying in the EU is not guaranteed – and crashing out is a real possibility.

But we will fight, we will be united and we won't be silent until we have a final say.

And it feels so powerful to be here in Newport talking about democracy on the 180th anniversary of the Chartist uprising.

The Chartists fought for an overhaul of our democratic system.

They fought for their right to vote,

For a secret ballot,

To end property qualification for MPs,

For a salary for MPs so that everyone could afford to take the position,

For equal constituencies

And finally for a General Election to take place every year.

Five out of six of their demands were met. I confess that I am not keen on an annual general electionalthough it certainly feels like General elections are getting more and more regular these days.

But once again we need the chartist spirit, because our electoral system is broken and unfair.

We see a Tory government that can barely hide their contempt for democracy.

And as Greens we will always fight for fairness, just like the Chartists didn't give up their fight. And like the chartists we have our list of demands:

A proportional representation voting system

Votes for 16 and 17 year olds

A constitutional convention

Further devolution

An elected upper chamber

And a written constitution

When I think of the Chartists, it makes me wonder how history will remember us.

And as this decade comes to a close in just three months, I have been worried that it would be remembered as the decade that we ignored the 12 year warning by the IPCC.

Another decade where we failed ecology, climate and communities.

But maybe this was premature,

Because just as this decade is ending we are seeing something happening that none of us had dared to dream of.

School strikers have energised a truly youth-led international movement.

Extinction Rebellion's non-violent direct action has ensured that the climate emergency is being talked about in the media.

And hundreds of Greens elected and leading on policy to protect people and planet across the country.

As we step forward I hope we will see the next decade as the roaring 20s – not like the 1920s of glitz and decadence, but the 2020s in which people refuse to remain silent while the establishment fails to fix social and environmental inequalities on this planet.

So we are going to stop asking nicely and start demanding some big changes now.

While the climate emergency has gained publicity, we need to demand the government also address the ecological emergency.

We need to protect our habitats, rewild our countryside and reintroduce species which have been driven away through habitat loss and hunting.

The ecological crisis isn't just about planting trees, it's about enabling ecosystems that have evolved together to be revitalised.

Let's not forget that our right to the countryside was won by working people during the Kinder Scout mass trespass.

We must fight for future generations to continue to have that right to the countryside.

After the premature passing of Polly Higgins this year, I want to ensure that her message is amplified across this country.

We need a pause button on ecological destruction, and our environment needs to be protected.

Imagine if drilling for oil in the Arctic was seen internationally to be illegal as a crime for damaging our planet irreversibly.

Imagine if we didn't need to debate whether fracking should be allowed because our guiding legal principle would be that industrial practices should not be allowed to put profit before people and the environment.

In the memory of Polly, and all earth protectors I want to reaffirm our commitment to implementing a law of Ecocide.

Rather than spending £25 billion on new roads we demand that the government invest in a Green New Deal, put an end to our ridiculously high train fares and ensure that the greenest option is always the cheapest and easiest option.

We must bring an end to the relentless growth of flights.

Across the country, airports are lobbying hard to get through proposals to expand – whether it's new runways or reducing restrictions against flight times, or huge dual carriageways to get more people to the airport.

But because we aren't in government quite yet we need to make our demands in other ways.

So today here at conference I will be launching a petition against airport expansion which I want you all to sign and share.

Let's call time on airport growth and demand an end to government subsidies for the aviation industry.

Conference..

where the Green's lead others follow.

We're on the right side of science and will be on the right side of history.

Your presence today shows your commitment to building a better future

A greener future

A future we can be proud of

Now is the time to say yes to Europe

No to Climate Chaos.

Thank you Conference

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Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley's speech at Autumn Conference, Newport, 2019



4 October 2019

I want to start by saying thank you.

You know, we don't hear it often enough.

Thank you to all the leaflet deliverers and the door knockers.

The activists and councillors.

The food preparers and the motion writers (well most of them).

The committee members and working groups.

The staff and volunteers.

You are the backbone of our party, and we couldn't do it without each and every one of you.

And I want to say a special thanks to Sian who is giving a speech on Sunday, focusing on getting London's first Green Mayor.

Sian your commitment, your passion, your determination is inspirational and it has been a pleasure to work with you this last year.

What a year it's been!

And what a year it's been!

I was in Brussels three weeks ago meeting with the leaders of other European Green Parties.

A Green Wave is sweeping the continent, and we are surfing it across England and Wales.

Truly, this has been one of the most extraordinary years in our Party's history.

At the beginning of May, we more than doubled our Councillors.

A few weeks later, we more than doubled our MEPs.

And we've increased our presence in Parliament with Natalie joining Jenny in the House of Lords

(The urge to bow in her presence will be even harder to resist!)

And we've just hit an incredible milestone.

Last week we gained our fifty thousandth member of the Green Party.

And in November, Carla Denyer passed the country's first climate emergency motion.

Now over half of the UK's principal local authorities have done the same. Making it one of the fastest growing environmental movements in history.

From our new Young Green chairs – Rosie and Thomas – to Caroline Lucas holding the Government to account every single day in Parliament, the message is clear.

The oceans are rising but so are we.

The spark of dissent against climate breakdown was lit many years ago.

By activists struggling against oil extraction in the global south

By campaigners here in Britain camping outside power stations.

By Green politicians saying the unsayable – that an economy built on fossil fuels has catastrophic implications.

And that spark has become a wildfire of revolt.

With extinction rebellion taking the streets, youth strikers walking out of school – and yes more Green Politicians being elected than ever before.

Just look at the numbers of people taking climate action and forcing governments to sit up and take notice.

Six Million on the global climate strike.

100,000 on the streets of London.

Over 200 different strikes across the UK.

And the vast, vast majority of people saying our Government isn't doing enough.

We are here to be the megaphone of that movement

To give those people a political voice

And turn those demands into action.

And by making the climate crisis a political imperative, we're defining the

issue of our times.

Showing the way ahead for Governments all over the world.

But what of this Government?

While the planet burns, it fans the flames of hatred.

Bile, bitterness and division.

I am ashamed of what our country is becoming.

But this isn't just about Brexit.

This is the death rattle of an old order.

We are seeing the break up of the political system.

The breaking apart of the economic system.

The breakdown of our life support system.

We've been saying it was coming for years. And now it's here.

And the question for us is how we will respond.

The answer to me seems clear.

Now is the time for complete transformation of everything.

You know when I was born – 40 something years ago – we were given a dream.

A vision of the future, where we would create unprecedented wealth.

Technology and automation would mean we could spend more time with our family and friends.

Where we would discover that endless supply of energy that was the stuff of science fiction.

Well fast forward 40 years and we have created untold riches.

Technology has revolutionised everything.

And we have discovered how to harness the wind, the sun and the tides.

But instead of that vision we were promised, we work longer hours, the wealth is held by the super-rich while 14 million live in poverty and climate breakdown threatens our very existence.

No wonder people are angry and want change.

Because it is the same failing system that has shut people out from power that has brought us to the brink of environmental catastrophe.

The same system that has gutted our NHS and polluted our air.

Given us foodbanks while choking our oceans with plastic.

Closed borders while creating climate refugees.

Left people feeling helpless in a world that is out of control.

Everything needs to change.

And only the Green Party acknowledges the scale of the challenge and the magnitude of the action that must be taken.

The imperative to fight not only the threat of Brexit but the conditions that have brought us Brexit.

With a general election looming, a vote for the Green Party is the most powerful vote you can cast.

We will fight to Remain in Europe, yes, but we will also fight to transform Britain

Democracy

But the Prime Minister is still careering us towards a crash out Brexit, and he's willing to tear down democracy to do it.

And when caught manipulating the constitution, what does he do?

He laughs at justice and pretends he is on the side of the people.

Was Cambridge Analytica on the side of the people? (no)

Are Dominic Cummings and Jacob Rees Mogg on the side of the people? (no)

Are politicians who lie about money for the NHS and then pursue a destructive Brexit that would destroy lives on the side of the people? (no)

If they were, they wouldn't try to play people like pawns in a game.

If they were on the side of the people they would trust the people and give them a people's vote.

The New Authoritarianism

But the mask is slipping as these politicians desperately cling onto power.

They know they that the system has had its day.

But their swan song is a nasty tune.

An authoritarian anthem – whose sheet music is the divide and rule script.

And we must resist it with every fibre in our being.

The political classes won't say it. So we will.

Learn the lessons of history.

When you see the scapegoating of disabled people. Of migrants. Of those on benefits.

Injunctions against protesters.

Surveillance deployed against everyone.

Indefinite detention.

The accusation that judges are enemies of the people.

The denial of science.

Racism and sexism not just being normalised, but espoused by leaders.

We cannot stay silent.

We cannot compromise and we must say with one voice, "no more".

And it must also involve action.

The way to take on the new authoritarianism. The path to unite our country. The route to transformation of our economy, must be a radical shift of power.

And we would rebuild a democracy fit for the 21st Century.

Just imagine what 160 local authorities who have passed climate emergency motions could do with real power.

We'd give it to them.

Increasing corporation tax to fair levels to reversing cuts to local authority budgets so they can and become the engines of a Green New Deal.

Real power to ban fracking, issue green investment bonds, renew infrastructure with low carbon alternatives, create renewable energy, build new council housing and insulate old homes, support green local businesses and run local transport.

Participatory democracy, allowing residents to form panels and citizens assemblies to directly input into decision making.

That's what taking back control looks like.

And we'd bring transformation at the national level too.

A fossil-free politics, liberated from vested interests.

A constitutional convention.

A bill of rights and a written constitution

Proportional representation.

An elected second chamber.

And we'd abolish the Home Office.

Because transformation of our country demands a system that is truly representative and fair to everyone.

And that's why we aren't taking a revoke Article 50 position.

We may disagree with those on the other side of the debate over Europe.

We may disagree with the corruption of the referendum.

But that is not a reason to ignore and sideline those who voted to leave.

We have always said that the referendum must be the start, not the end, of a democratic process.

If we want to stay in Europe we must win the argument on Europe.

And we say to Labour this. Yes we are glad that you have, finally, signed up to a People's Vote. We wish you had done it sooner.

But it's not enough.

Don't agree to end free movement. Don't acquiesce to pulling up the drawbridge. Don't accept that we should all be left poorer.

We need a cast iron guarantee that you'd fight for Britain to remain.

Future generations (present generations)

We'll have a better future if we remain in Europe.

Our young people know it.

They know it is only by working together we can address the climate emergency.

While politicians have buried their heads in the sand and denied the truth, they have taken to the streets to call for climate justice.

Young people. The ones truly shut out of politics. The ones having their future stolen from them, are showing what leadership looks like.

Isn't it troubling when a 10-year-old has to take time out of their day to remind us of our responsibilities?

Young people are informed. Young people are organised. Young people must be heard.

So today I am setting out how the Greens would give young people real power.

Not just votes at 16 for Parliament but the right to stand for Parliament.

A Future Generations Act which would require the needs of young people to be taken into account before every Government decision.

A minister for future generations to represent young people at the heart of Government.

A young person's select committee, made up of representatives from the Youth Parliament, with the power to scrutinise and hold the Government to account.

And until we get reform of our electoral system and the House of Lords, we'd appoint young people to the Second Chamber of Parliament too so they can vote and initiate legislation.

Our future leaders should be given the power to lead right now.

The climate emergency

When a country faces an existential threat it moves onto a war footing.

And that is what we must do.

Hanging above everything else is the climate emergency, threatening our very survival.

The survival of our species.

The greatest challenge in modern history.

Extreme weather events are breaking records. People are dying in floods and heatwaves. Crops are failing, sea levels are rising, the Sixth Extinction is gripping the globe.

And the impacts are not evenly felt. The poorest are hit hardest. Those who contributed least to the climate crisis are suffering already for the gas guzzling governments and corporations who contributed the most.

That's just where we are now. At a point eight degree rise above pre-industrial levels.

Imagine what 3 degrees looks like, or six.

Or runaway climate breakdown.

It is time to stop denying the truth and let the truth have its day.

Business as usual is not an option.

We have just ten years to complete what needs to be done.

And we cannot continue on with the same path and with the same thinking that has brought us to the brink of disaster.

The Green New Deal

We need a ten-year mobilisation to get to net zero by 2030.

So today we are setting out a green vision for wholesale, urgent transformation – of agriculture, of transport, of industry of energy, the very way we live and work.

For too long, Governments have pursued GDP in the mistaken belief that a rising tide floats all boats.

But those without boats have been drowning. Sucked down by a whirlpool of poverty, worsening air quality, chronic mental health and ecological destruction.

And that tide is set to drown us all.

So we'd put the Climate Chancellor into Downing Street.

Make the Treasury a Ministry of Transformation.

Carbon budgets at the top of the agenda. The environment as the bottom line.

All spending and decision-making determined by the health of our natural world and the wellbeing of people.

Green New Deal for Work

And that chancellor would drive forward the Green New Deal.

The biggest release of investment to local communities and local businesses that the country has ever seen.

A massive investment in green technology

Decarbonizing the economy and creating millions of green jobs.

But let me explain what I mean by 'Green Jobs'. Yes it means people in hard

hards installing solar.

It means factories manufacturing green tech.

But green jobs also means an army of carers, teachers, artists, nurses, and youth workers. Jobs that are high value and low carbon.

And they must be the backbone of a British economy that prioritises human needs over corporate greed.

Powered by empathy and kindness as much as solar and wind.

So we'd close the Government's arms export agency and end all subsidies for the UK arms industry.

War, misery and suffering would no longer be among Britain's exports to the world.

We'd scrap plans for a new generation of nuclear weapons too and instead put an extra £6bn a year into the NHS.

It would mean the closure of all detention centres, halving our prison population, and the excluded jobs they can build a life on.

Transforming our education system, abolishing SATS and league tables. Young people no longer treated as economic units to compete in a global marketplace. Equipped instead with the confidence, skills and knowledge to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing world around them.

Unleashing a new wave of creativity and innovation by giving small businesses access to lending at affordable rates, through Community Banks.

Structuring work to meet the reality of an increasingly automated world. Reducing the working week.

And to give everyone safety and opportunity in the new green economy we'd scrap universal credit, ditch benefit sanctions and enrich everyone with a Universal Basic Income.

Green New Deal for Transport

And conference the Green New Deal means a green transport revolution too.

The slash and burn of HS2 must be halted in its tracks.

We cannot allow this assault and destruction of over 100 ancient woodlands, and the loss of invaluable biodiversity.

We'd spend that £70bn on new local transport infrastructure for every local community. Electrification of rail, new lines and buses.

And we'd scrap the Government's road building programme, and use Vehicle

Excise Duty to deliver free bus travel for everyone right across the country.

The biggest travel upgrade this country has ever seen.

Giving people the incentive to get out of their cars and onto affordable, accessible, state of the art transport.

We'd end airport expansion and introduce a progressive frequent flyer levy to end the binge flying of the super-rich.

A Carbon Tax and an end to petrol and diesel cars by 2030.

That's the kind of action we need to transform our transport system for good.

Green New Deal for Agriculture

And our relationship with the land needs to change too.

We must move away from the extraction of resources that enriches a few to a future where everyone benefits from nurturing our environment and the species who rely on it.

So we will transform our land. Restore it to its pre-factory farming state. Reduce the carbon it emits and increase the carbon it absorbs.

When the land flourishes, we will flourish with it.

Rewilded landscapes, a revitalised natural world, planting 700 million trees, a quarter of the UK covered by forest by 2030.

And yes, someone's got to say it so we will.

That means making it cheaper to move away from meat-based, carbon intensive diets to embrace healthier low carbon alternatives.

Green New Deal for Energy

Communities like Newport could once again be at the heart of industry and prosperity.

This country could lead the world in clean technology. Just six tidal lagoons down the west coast could provide as much power as a dirty nuclear plant. Built in a fraction of the time, safer, cleaner, and ready to provide energy on demand.

100,000 new low-carbon council homes a year, 30 million homes insulated to the highest standards, old gas boilers stripped out and every home a powerstation, fueled by decentralised renewable energy.

It's not fanciful thinking. It's practical. It's realistic.

We must do what science demands not what is deemed political possible.

Conclusion

It's easy to fear the future.

Our century is only 19 years old, but already we have seen 17 of the hottest years ever recorded.

Brexit hangs over our heads, fires rage from the Amazon to the Arctic, and democracy is under attack.

But the night is always darkest before the dawn.

Greens don't fear the future.

We welcome the future. Because we have the way and will.

Taking decisive action to address the climate emergency isn't just about averting disaster. It's about creating a brand new Britain.

Forget austerity. Forget worshiping GDP. Forget pointless and bloody foreign wars. Forget fracking, coal, and oil. Forget working longer hours for lower pay. Forget air so toxic it chokes you to death.

This can be a new start.

The best days of Britain can still be ahead of us.

We need a decisive break from business as usual, and we are ready to make the leap.

The Green Party has always been on the right side of history.

The time is now to shape our future.

Thank you.

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