

Green MEP welcomes Gove pledge on 'Green Brexit' but says Environment Secretary still in 'special measures'



21 July 2017

Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West, who sits on the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, has welcomed Michael Gove's pledge to deliver a "Green Brexit" [1]. Dr Scott Cato said:

"It's a moment to celebrate the extraordinary: Greens agree with Michael Gove. I'm left wondering if he has been reading the reports I commissioned on how we can create a more sustainable farming system [2]. However, it doesn't take a farmer to tell you that word's butter no parsnips and we will need to keep the new Environment Secretary in special measures until he delivers on his promises."

Speaking this morning on BBC Radio 4 Today [3], Molly Scott Cato said:

"As long as we make sure that he doesn't consider grouse moors and other things his wealthy friends do with their land to be of environmental benefit, I think we can be in agreement."

She went on to argue that the most pressing environmental priority was tackling climate change. She said:

"In order to stay within the 2-degree safety limit we have to recapture a lot of the carbon that is already in the atmosphere which is very much about how we use our land. We should be rewarding the type of farming that captures and stores carbon such as restoring wetlands, greater use of agri-forestry and tree planting."

Dr Scott Cato concluded:

"Where Michael Gove and I part company is over our membership of the EU. I continue to believe that the best place for UK farmers and food producers is inside the EU, and in particular inside the single market; around 65% of total UK agricultural exports go to the EU. None-the-less, I am pleased to see one of the key architects of Brexit pledging that in future he wants subsidies paid on the basis of social and environmental benefits rather than just going to rich landowners. This is a policy long championed by Greens across Europe."

Notes

[1]

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/michael-gove-green-brexit-environment-secretary-climate-change-theresa-may-cabinet-conservative->

[a7851466.html](#)

[2] <http://mollymep.org.uk/2017/02/20/agri-reports/>

[3] Interview can be heard on Molly's SoundCloud:
<https://soundcloud.com/molly-scott-cato/response-to-michael-goves-plans-for-greenbrexit>

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[Green Party responds to inflation figures](#)



18 July 2017

The Green Party has responded to news that inflation dropped from 2.9% in May to 2.6% in June [1], saying that despite the good news prices are still rising faster than wages.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“Despite a slight drop in inflation workers are still seeing their pay squeezed, as prices continue to rise faster than wages. The Government will try and paint today's figures as good news – but the truth is that the Tories are presiding over an economy in which working people struggle to feed their families. Communities never recovered from the bankers' crisis in 2008 and now they're faced with the economic calamity of a Tory brexit.

“It's abundantly clear that Britain needs an urgent pay rise, to stop more families falling into poverty. Public sector pay caps must be scrapped and the minimum wage should be raised without delay. The cruel benefits squeeze must also be abandoned, to stop Britain's poorest people falling into destitution. The Tory high command are stuck like a rabbit in the Brexit headlights – unable to take the action needed to stop our economy and living standards falling off a cliff.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-40642254>

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[Green Party: Right to protest under threat in Lancashire](#)



13 July 2017

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, has written to the CEO of fracking company Cuadrilla to demand answers over allegations security staff punched an activist and pinned him down by the throat.

Bartley visited the Preston New Road fracking site today (Thursday 13 July) to meet anti-fracking campaigners and hand deliver the letter to Francis Egan, Cuadrilla chief executive. Joining Bartley on the visit was indigenous leader and Standing Rock activist from the US, William Hawk Birdshead.

Police in Lancashire are [investigating reports of assault](#) by a security guard at the site, with protestors also making complaints about heavy handed police. Pictures show activist Robbie Gillett being pinned to the floor by his throat by security guards.

The letter [full text below] asks Egan to confirm:

1. If he is aware of the allegations;
2. What actions he will be taking to investigate them;
3. What actions he will take against the security guard(s) and staff in question if these allegations are substantiated;
4. What existing processes he has in place to ensure that all staff contracted through external companies conduct themselves safely and appropriately;
5. What steps will be taken to ensure such violence does not take place in the future.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“The reports coming from Cuadrilla’s fracking site in Lancashire are of grave concern. Protestors being driven into with a van, punched in the face, held by the throat – and all by workers employed on the site.

“Cuadrilla must respond to these serious allegations immediately. Protest is a pillar of our free society and democracy. Cuadrilla must make clear what it is doing to investigate and ensure violence is never used against anyone at its site.”

Robbie Gillett, anti-fracking activist, said:

“Cuadrilla’s staff were in no way justified in punching me in the face whilst already restraining me on the floor of a public highway, nor in strangling me as the photos show. That amounts to common assault. This was a violent, disproportionate and unlawful use of force which is a typical of an industry that has no social licence to operate.”

Ellen Gibson, a spokesperson [from Reclaim the Power](#) who was present at the site and witnessed the action, said:

“Today’s brutality by Cuadrilla’s security team represents a totally disproportionate, violent and unnecessary response to the ongoing peaceful protests at Preston New Road. Particularly concerning were the actions of the Head of Security, who punched and throttled a man.

“While security guards may be allowed to use ‘reasonable force’ to eject someone from private property; punching demonstrators in the face whilst pinning them to the ground on a public road amounts to assault.

“This violent behaviour from Cuadrilla’s staff against community members and supporters cannot be left unchallenged – the Police must act to guarantee the safety and right to peaceful protest of all people present at Preston New Road. What little credibility Cuadrilla had in the local community and across the UK has been demolished after today’s actions by their staff.”

Notes:

1. Full text of the letter to Cuadrilla:

The Green Party
The Biscuit Factory
A Block (201)
100 Clements Rd
London
SE16 4DG

Francis Egan

Cuadrilla Resources Ltd

Cuadrilla House, Unit 6 Sceptre Court

Sceptre Way, Bamber Bridge

Preston

PR5 6AW

12/7/2017

Dear Mr. Egan

I'm writing to you about the ongoing protests taking place at your fracking site in Lancashire.

I've been extremely concerned by a number of eyewitness testimonies from people at the protest, regarding the behaviour of your contracted security guards and staff. There have been reports of hostility and even violence.

Last week, I was troubled by an image (enclosed) of a protester being held down by the throat, and numerous eyewitness testimonies that the protester was punched in the face by the same security guard, shortly after the photograph was taken. The individual has suffered significant facial injuries consistent with the descriptions of violence we have received.

Further to this incident, I was shocked to see footage earlier this week of what appeared to be a member of Cuadrilla staff hitting a peaceful protester with a moving van at some speed, and continuing to drive away. Eyewitness allegations claim that this appeared to be deliberate.

If these testimonies are correct then these would appear to be cases of very serious assault.

Please could you tell me:

1. If you are aware of the allegations;
2. What actions you will be taking to investigate them;
3. What actions you will take against the security guard(s) and staff in question if these allegations are substantiated;
4. What existing processes you have in place to ensure that all staff contracted through external companies conduct themselves safely and appropriately;
5. What steps will be taken to ensure such violence does not take place in the future.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Bartley

Co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales

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[Caroline Lucas: 'Environment-shaped hole' in Repeal Bill](#)



13 July 2017

Caroline Lucas, the co-leader of the Green Party, has said that there is an 'environment-shaped hole' in the Repeal Bill which the Government published today [1].

Lucas is specifically concerned that the bill lacks provision for enforcing environmental laws.

She said:

"There's an enormous environment-shaped hole in the Government's Brexit plans. The Repeal Bill may transfer EU laws onto the British statute, but there's no provision here for ensuring that these laws are properly enforced by institutions in the UK. The Government knows that this simple transfer isn't enough to ensure that our environment is protected – and their refusal to legislate for specific environmental protections and enforcement is reckless.

"I'll be working with fellow MPs to table amendments to the Repeal Bill, specifically in order to force the Government to ensure that environmental laws are properly enforced as we go through the Brexit process."

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-40589510>

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[Greens accuse government of](#)

'unacceptable dithering' on Swansea tidal lagoon



12 July 2017

***Funding put on hold after government fails to approve project**

***Greens demand a date for final decision**

***Green Party leaders: "This dithering has resulted in uncertainty over investment, putting this valuable project in jeopardy"**

The Green Party has written to the Government to demand action on the Swansea tidal lagoon, which has not been approved despite a report calling for the project to go ahead.

The lagoon's investors have put further funding on hold [1] as the government is yet to approve or even respond to the review by former minister Charles Hendry, which was published over six months ago [2].

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, and Grenville Ham, leader of the Green Party of Wales, have written to Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to raise concerns over the delay and demand a date the government will respond to the Hendry review and make a final decision.

In the letter, they said:

"The Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon project would be an integral part of the energy revolution this country needs. The independent Hendry review commissioned by the UK government gave a glowing endorsement of the project, highlighting that the energy provided would be less expensive than offshore wind and significantly less expensive than nuclear.

"The report – which unambiguously called for strong government backing of this project – was published over six months ago. Yet, not only has the government failed to act on its clear recommendations, it has not even published a response. This dithering has resulted in uncertainty over investment, putting this valuable project in jeopardy."

Notes:

1. <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/money-drying-up-swanea-tidal-13306328>
2. <https://wales.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/01/12/wales-green-party-welcomes-positive-findings-of-hendry-review-on-swanea-lagoon/>
3. Full text of the letter:

Dear Rt. Hon Greg Clark MP

We have been extremely concerned by this week's reports that investors might withdraw from the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon project if it is not shortly approved by Government.

As Green Party leaders, we strongly support the transition to renewable power across the UK. Therefore, we are writing to urge you to give investors the clarity that they need.

The Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon project would be an integral part of the energy revolution this country needs. The independent Hendry review commissioned by the UK government gave a glowing endorsement of the project, highlighting that the energy provided would be less expensive than offshore wind and significantly less expensive than nuclear.

Beyond the lower costs of energy, the project would also create thousands of jobs, it would help to kick-start a new industry, and it would make a valuable contribution to our decarbonisation targets. In contrast to Hinkley, the tidal lagoon would also be on grid sooner, would be in operation for longer, and would carry significantly less environmental risk.

The report – which unambiguously called for strong government backing of this project – was published over six months ago. Yet, not only has the government failed to act on its clear recommendations, it has not even published a response. This dithering has resulted in uncertainty over investment, putting this valuable project in jeopardy.

Please will you now provide a firm date for your department's formal response to the Hendry review and your decision on whether to support the project? In doing so, we hope that you will accept the findings of the Hendry review and accept the wishes of the Welsh Government by approving this project.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Bartley

Co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales

Grenville Ham

Leader of the Green Party of Wales

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