

Green Party: Government should stop blaming migrants for public service crisis and focus on taxing wealthy



27 January 2017

The Green Party has called on the Government to stop blaming migrants for the crises facing public services and focus on making the wealthiest people in society pay their fair share instead.

The party made the call in response to news the public accounts committee has said HMRC is failing to stop rich tax dodgers.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader, said:

“While the Government blames migrants and benefit claimants for the problems our country faces from housing to the NHS, it gives special treatment to tax avoiders.

“If we made sure rich tax dodgers paid their fair share there would be more money to support vital services and build the homes we need. Wealth inequality in Britain has soared on the Tories’ watch. We need action to tackle the tax avoidance industry as well as a wealth tax on the top earners if we are to redress the balance.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-38764923>

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New candidate for Greater Manchester Metro Mayor contest



26 January 2017

Following the tragic and untimely death of Deyika Nzeribe earlier this month,

the Greater Manchester Green Parties have selected Will Patterson [1], chair of the Wigan & Leigh Green Party, to contest the Metro Mayor election in Greater Manchester. The vote, due to be held on 4 May, will give more than two million voters across the City Region the opportunity to vote for Green policies.

Will, a Wigan resident who has lived in Springfield for the last three years, joined the Green Party in 2014, and stood as the Green Party Parliamentary Candidate for Wigan in 2015. He has been an active campaigner for more public engagement in the devolution process.

He is a member of Frack Free Wigan, Leigh and Makerfield, and helped establish Wigan People's Assembly Against Austerity. Last year, he supported Wigan Together, an event designed to promote and celebrate the diversity of the local community, and defend it against far right groups who were planning to march through the town. He was also delighted to sit on the organising committee of the inaugural Wigan Pride, which was held last August.

Will said: "These are tough circumstances to run in, but Deyika worked tirelessly to offer Greater Manchester the Green voice that the region desperately needs. I'm honoured to have been called upon to continue the amazing work that Deyika started, and together with party members from across the region, I'm looking forward to working for a fairer, more democratic and greener Greater Manchester.

Setting out his approach for the campaign, Will said: "This isn't the devolution I would have hoped for: it's been dropped on the people following closed-door back-room negotiations between Councils and the Government. If devolution is to work for the people of Greater Manchester, it needs to be owned by the people of Greater Manchester and deliver real solutions to the problems we face. We need a combined authority that will prioritise the real need for social and affordable homes; we need to do more to tackle the chaos of climate change that's hitting the region right now; and we need to open the doors of our new institutions so that the people of Greater Manchester can see and share in the decisions being taken in our name.

"Successive Westminster governments have left Greater Manchester behind – if we're to tackle their legacy of poverty and inequality, we need to do devolution differently. I'll empower not just our cities, but our citizens."

Notes:

1. Will Patterson

Will is 33. Over the last few years, he has been a contract worker in Manchester, working in IT Project Management until his last contract expired just before Christmas. And as a renter, Will is part of a generation that faces uncertain prospects with permanent jobs and affordable housing seemingly out of reach for many working people under 35. He feels his experiences dealing with the job market and the Government's new benefits system give him a good understanding of what life is like for many people across Greater Manchester.

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[Green Party: Poverty to blame for child health inequality](#)



26 January 2017

The Green Party is deeply concerned child health in the UK is lagging behind that of most other European countries due to poverty rates [1]. Experts say little progress has been made to address the social factors behind health inequality since it was highlighted in a Government report in 2010 [2].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“It’s appalling we’re failing to give children the best start in life, even though Britain is one of the richest countries in the world. Children deserve to be happy and healthy, no matter where they are born or how much money their parents make.

“We can’t tackle a growing health gap between rich and poor children without looking at the way inequality is entrenched more widely. We’re in an age of insecurity where life is getting worse for those who are struggling the most.

“The Government has a dismal record on child poverty, abolishing the child poverty unit [3] and scrapping child poverty targets [4]. Government cuts to public services have taken a toll and unless the Prime Minister prioritises tackling poverty, inequality will continue to soar, with a flow on effect on children’s health and the NHS, which will struggle to cope with increased demand.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/jan/25/poverty-in-the-uk-jeopardising-childrens-health-warns-landmark-report>
2. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-38743574>
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/dec/20/fears-after-government-abolishes-civil-services-child-poverty-unit>
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jul/01/government-scrap-legal-requirements-child-poverty>

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Hard Brexit will devastate small businesses warns Green MEP



25 January 2017

South West Green MEP, Molly Scott Cato, who is Green Party economics and finance speaker, has warned that the hard Brexit being pursued by the Conservative government will prove disastrous for small businesses in the UK. Dr Scott Cato says that exiting the single market, leaving the customs union and ending free movement will all hit small businesses hard.

A new report by the Federation of Small Business (FSB) [1] paints a mixed picture of the potential impacts for small businesses of leaving the EU. However, the FSB recognises that 92% of small business exports go to the EU, but a third of small businesses surveyed for the report expect a decrease in their exports as a result of the UK leaving the EU. Around 1 in 5 of FSB members employ at least one or more non-UK EU citizens and the organisation acknowledges the importance of being able to continue accessing appropriately skilled workers for jobs that they create. Molly Scott Cato said:

"Small businesses are the bedrock of the local and regional economy. They account for more than 99% of all businesses in the UK and small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) between them employ almost 16 million people; 60% of the private sector workforce [2]. With such a huge percentage of their exports going into the EU single market, withdrawal from this market is clearly going to have a massive impact on thousands of UK workers.

"Many small firms are also heavily reliant on mid-skill and unskilled workers; the very people who will not be covered by agreements over employment quotas if we lose freedom of movement.

"Furthermore, the costs of meeting new bureaucratic requirements if we leave the customs union will make exports unviable at a small scale.

"So, the extreme form of Brexit that the government is pushing for will have hugely negative impacts on thousands of small businesses and millions of workers. But this is not what we were told would happen as a result of leaving the EU. No one voted for a decline in our exports and loss of jobs. It is clear that the Tories can no longer claim to be the Party of business".

Earlier today, Dr Scott Cato met with the EU and International chair of the

FSB, Ken Moon, to discuss concerns his members have about the UK leaving the EU, the single market and the customs union.

[1]

<http://www.fsb.org.uk/docs/default-source/fsb-org-uk/fsb-brexit-interim-survey-exec-summary-jan-25-2017.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

[2] <http://www.fsb.org.uk/media-centre/small-business-statistics>

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[Green Party urges Theresa May: put climate change on the agenda with Trump](#)



25 January 2017

***Caroline Lucas: Trump is signalling his intent to put rocket boosters behind the fossil fuel industry**

Theresa May is being urged to raise the issue of climate change with President Donald Trump when she meets with him later this week. In a letter [1] sent to the Prime Ministers, politicians from the Green Party urged the Prime Minister to 'seek firm assurances that he [Trump] will not withdraw from the Paris Agreement, and that he will remain committed to domestic climate legislation, such as the Clean Power Plan'.

The call to Theresa May comes after President Trump signed two executive orders yesterday aiming to push ahead with major pipeline projects in the US [2]. Both the Dakota and Keystone pipelines are regarded as extremely damaging by environmentalists and climate-scientists [3].

The United States is responsible for 15% of global carbon emissions – and their actions are crucial in shaping international climate policy. Donald Trump has previously cast doubt on climate science [4]– and has consistently called for policies designed to fast-track the burning of fossil fuels.

Caroline Lucas, the co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“Donald Trump’s first few days as President have revealed his contempt for environmental protection. By pushing ahead with the Dakota and Keystone

pipelines he is signalling his intent to put rocket boosters behind the fossil fuel industry. Theresa May has a duty to make a stand – and to demand assurances from President Trump that he will not abandon the Paris climate change agreement. Failing to bring up climate change with President Trump would be a dereliction of duty from Theresa May, and we urge her to put this global challenge at the top of her agenda for their meeting.”

[1] Full letter to Theresa May:

Dear Theresa,

We are writing concerning your visit to the United States tomorrow to visit President Trump.

As you will know, President Trump and senior members of his new team have systematically cast doubt on climate science, whilst supporting polluting energy sources and downplaying the need for the transition to a low-carbon economy. As a clear statement of his intentions, at the moment of his inauguration, all mentions of climate change were removed from the Whitehouse website – instead, there appeared a raft of policies designed to fast-track the burning of fossil fuels.

With 2016 now confirmed as the hottest year on record, and the world heading for 4 degrees warming by the end of the century, there has never been a more dangerous time for the scaling back of climate action anywhere in the world. The United States is responsible for 15% of global emissions and its leadership is vital in setting the path to a zero-carbon future.

Given the urgency of the climate crisis, and the importance of the United States in global efforts to tackle it, we are writing to ask you to raise climate change with President Trump when you see him on Friday. More specifically, we are asking to you seek firm assurances that he will not withdraw from the Paris Agreement, and that he will remain committed to domestic climate legislation, such as the Clean Power Plan, that form an important part of US international commitments.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Jonathan Bartley, co-leader

Caroline Lucas MP, co-leader

Amelia Womack, deputy leader

Keith Taylor MEP, South-East

Molly Scott Cato MEP, South-West

Jean Lambert MEP, London

Sian Berry, London Assembly Member

Caroline Russell, London Assembly Member

Andrew Cooper, Energy spokesperson

[2] <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/01/24/politics/trump-keystone-xl-dakota-access-pipelines-executive-actions/>

[3] <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jan/24/keystone-dakota-access-pipeline-executive-order>

[4] <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2016/jun/03/hillary-clinton/yes-donald-trump-did-call-climate-change-chinese-h/>

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