

Green Party: Climate change risk increasingly severe



25 January 2017

The Green Party has responded to a report published today which reveals Europe is warming at a faster pace than the global average and faces multiple climate hazards [1].

The European Environment Agency report is the most comprehensive study of Europe's vulnerability to climate change available [2]. It predicts Atlantic-facing countries will face heavier rainfalls, increased flood risk and more severe storm damage.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

"Our environment is being destroyed all around us – our oceans and mountains, our wildlife and our homes are all under direct threat from climate extremes. As the planet races towards the 2C warming limit, we have two options as country. We can drag our feet and watch our environment suffer or we can move decisively away from the dirty, dangerous technology of the past by keeping fossil fuels in the ground and investing in renewables.

"Standing up to climate deniers has never been more important – even if they hold some of the most powerful positions in the world. The actions Donald Trump takes in the US will directly impact our lives in Europe.

"The EEA report makes for terrifying reading, but it's also an opportunity for Europe to develop effective strategies for tackling greenhouse gas emissions and for Britain to step up and lead the way on transitioning to a zero carbon economy."

Notes:

1.
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jan/25/europe-faces-droughts-floods-storms-climate-change-accelerates>

2.
<http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/climate-change-poses-increasingly-severe>

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Green Party announces anti-nuclear Copeland by-election candidate



24 January 2017

The Green Party has selected Jack Lenox as its Copeland by-election candidate, opposing nuclear power and instead offering a safe energy future with increased investment in renewables.

The announcement from the Greens comes just one day after Labour said its candidate, Gillian Troughton, has been “quite clear of her support for the nuclear industry, no ifs and no buts”. [1]

Jack will also be campaigning for Britain to maintain a close relationship with Europe and to stop the creeping marketisation of the NHS, as well as vowing action to protect West Cumbrian homes from flooding.

Jack has lived in Copeland for four years and works as a software engineer. An active member of the community, Jack performs with and serves on the committee of the Keswick Amateur Operatic Society. In 2015, he helped organise the first web conference in Cumbria, bringing industry experts from across the world to Keswick.

Jack said:

“I’m delighted the Green Party has selected me to contest this by-election. Copeland has borne the brunt of Government funding cuts and healthcare is facing stark challenges – West Cumberland Hospital’s maternity and A&E departments are under threat. The constituency will also suffer if Theresa May rips the UK out of the single market and turns our country into a corporate tax haven.

“Copeland comprises some of the most deprived parts of the UK, it suffered severe flooding during the storms of last winter, and its constituents are forced to deal with continuous price hikes and cutbacks to public transport services. On top of all this, an ill-conceived new nuclear power plant is due to be built at Sellafield, the site of the UK’s worst ever nuclear disaster.

“The Green Party is the only party with truly progressive solutions to the issues Copeland faces. It’s a privilege and an honour to represent the Greens as a beacon of hope during this turbulent period in British politics.”

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“Jack is giving people in Copeland the chance to vote for a candidate who opposes nuclear power, believes in Britain having a close relationship with Europe and fights for a truly public NHS. No other party is able to offer

voters this clarity on the big issues facing the area. In a time of divisive politics and high levels of distrust, Jack will make an excellent Green Party candidate and we're proud to have him."

Notes:

1. <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2687914/labours-by-election-fight-to-hold-constituency-dominated-by-sellafield-nuclear-power-station-is-being-bankrolled-by-an-anti-nuclear-energy-firm/>

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Green Party responds to Supreme Court judgement



24 January 2017

Caroline Lucas, the co-leader of the Green Party, has responded to today's Supreme Court judgement.

She said:

"This case is a win for parliamentary democracy, and a blow for those minister who planned to railroad Brexit through without any proper scrutiny.

"The spotlight now falls on MPs – and in particular the Labour Party – to properly scrutinise the Government's plans and act accordingly. That must mean that Labour rethink the support they've given to triggering article 50 prematurely, and instead join those of us who refuse to be pushed into Theresa May's artificial Brexit timetable.

"It's astonishing that Ministers ever thought it was right to trigger Article 50 without a vote in Parliament – and their battle in the courts really does expose a contempt for the democratic process within the Conservative party.

"I will not be capitulating to the Tories over Brexit – and will vote against prematurely triggering Article 50 in the Spring. As the co-leader of a Party which stands for environmental, social and economic justice I will not support a Government offering no assurances to EU nationals living in Britain, threatening to turn this country into a tax haven and planning to throw us off the Brexit cliff edge by ending our membership of the Single Market and Customs Union."

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[Single market exit heralds disaster for family farms, warns Green MEP](#)



23 January 2017

The Green MEP for the South West, Molly Scott Cato, has warned that family farms could disappear from our countryside if the UK leaves the Single Market. Dr Scott Cato, who sits on the Agricultural Committee in the European Parliament, believes that in the absence of a new trade deal with Europe outside the Single Market, the UK would revert to WTO trade rules which could prove disastrous for farmers.

Under WTO trading rules, tariffs would be imposed on around 90% by value of the UK's exports to the EU [1]; the EU accounts for around 65% of total agricultural exports from the UK, while around 70% of the UK's imports originate from other EU countries [2]. Tariffs on both exports and imports would make UK farmers less competitive and increase both food prices for consumers and supply chain costs for food producers. Molly Scott Cato said:

"The decision by Theresa May to opt for a hard Brexit will strike our family farmers and small scale food producers particularly hard. They are the cornerstone of agriculture across many parts of the UK, so any tariff or non-tariff barriers could seriously weaken regional economies and devastate rural communities.

"The government has no plan on replacing the agricultural support and direct payments farmers receive through the Common Agriculture Policy; it wants to end free movement making it impossible to take on seasonal migrant labour from EU countries and exit the single market risking tariffs on exports and imports. This is a triple whammy few family farms could withstand."

Dr Scott Cato argues that Brexit does throw up opportunities for a new approach to farming, but doesn't believe the government have shown any willingness to support such an approach:

"Brexit could be used as an opportunity to move towards a diverse and ecologically sustainable farming system; one which focuses on relocating food production and boosting rural economies [3]. But so far all we have heard from the Defra secretary, Andrea Leadsom, are plans to shred EU

legislation, dismissing it as red tape [4]. But many of these measures are aimed at safeguarding our soils, protecting habitats, guaranteeing animal welfare and utilizing farmland for capturing and storing carbon to help in the fight against climate change.

“This government seems hell-bent on pushing large scale industrialised farming post-Brexit, and letting our family farms and small scale producers flounder. Such an approach will leave the 71% of our land currently used as farmland less protected and further damaged; less beneficial to protecting soils, biodiversity and animal welfare and less able to tackle climate change.”

Molly Scott Cato will launch a new report in the Spring on farming policy after Brexit which will identify opportunities on how farming can create environmental, social and economic benefits.

Notes

[1] http://www.cbi.org.uk/global-future/case_study06_wto.html

[2] <http://www.nfuonline.com/assets/61142>

[3]
<http://mollymep.org.uk/2016/09/14/green-meps-agricultural-support-post-brexit/>

[4]
<http://mollymep.org.uk/2017/01/04/defra-secretary-is-environmentally-irresponsible/>

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[Greens call on Defra to improve air pollution alerts](#)



23 January 2017

Jenny Jones, Green member of the House of Lords, has responded to the latest air pollution episode which saw some areas of the country hit Defra's highest warning level [1].

The London Mayor issued a health warning to millions of Londoners – but the

government continues to do nothing to alert people except tweet from its specialist @DefraUKAir account.

The official Defra alert page says that there are no alerts at this time, despite pollution being high or very high in the south and east of the country.

Jenny Jones said:

“The Mayor of London clearly cares about the health impacts of bad air on people living and working in the capital, but this government is letting everyone else suffer without any warning what’s so ever. When air pollution episodes are capable of triggering an extra 300 deaths as well as hundreds of emergency admissions to hospitals around the country, I think that we have to consider emergency measures to discourage driving, encourage a switch away from diesel and promote less polluting alternatives.

“The government’s sole aim is to downplay the whole thing. No press release. It doesn’t even make the main DEFRA twitter feed, or use the NHS to reach out to vulnerable people. They want to tick the smallest of boxes by putting out the minimum of information. It is then up to those who are vulnerable to respiratory diseases and heart conditions to find that information. It is criminal neglect by a government that has lost two court cases over its inadequate plans.”

Notes:

1. <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/latest/>

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