

Labour councillor joins Exeter Greens



28 February 2017

The Green Party in Exeter have gained their first city councillor, following the defection from Labour by Alphington councillor, Chris Musgrave. Councillor Musgrave says he has been drawn to the Green Party because of their deep-seated commitment to openness and transparency in local government, something he says is 'in short supply with the current Labour administration.'

Councillor Musgrave says he has become increasingly disillusioned with a 'small clique making decisions behind closed doors' and a refusal by the Labour group to accept proper scrutiny in decision making. He also accuses the Labour-run council of ignoring the results of public consultations, Cllr Chris Musgrave said:

"Openness and transparency is in short supply in the local Labour Party. Major decisions are increasingly made by a small clique behind closed doors with the majority of councillors locked out of the process. Whenever I have challenged the Labour Party and Labour-led council on major decisions – which is exactly what I believe I should be doing as an elected Councillor – I have been told in no uncertain terms to be quiet.

"I have become convinced that the best way I can serve the residents of my ward is by joining the Green Party, which is clearly committed to open and transparent local government. I have also become increasingly convinced that the Greens have the right policies for protecting public services, safeguarding our local environment and tackling the city's rising inequality.

"The Tories seem incapable or unwilling to challenge Exeter Labour, so it will be up to the Green Party to hold the Labour Party to account. As the city's first Green councillor, I intend to do just that."

Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West, has expressed her delight that Exeter has its first Green councillor. She said:

"Great news for Exeter! The South West is the strongest region of the country for Greens. This defection builds on resounding wins in recent local elections in [Weymouth](#) and the [Forest of Dean](#) – where Greens unseated a UKIP councillor. People across the region are coming to realise that the Green Party offers effective opposition and a clear alternative vision to business as usual".

Caroline Lucas MP, co-leader of the Green Party, who studied as an undergraduate at Exeter University, said:

"It's great that Exeter now has a Green councillor to hold the Labour run council to account. Greens are committed to working hard for their

communities and fighting the corner of local people. This defection will strengthen our local party and puts us in good stead to win further seats in the coming years.”

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[Greens help secure historic vote on tax dodging](#)



28 February 2017

Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West, has welcomed a historic vote on clamping down on tax dodging, as committee members in the European Parliament today voted for a number of key Green demands [1]. By an overwhelming majority (87-1), MEPs voted for a revision of the Anti-Money Laundering Directive, which will tighten rules on trusts and transparency. Molly Scott Cato is a member of the Economics committee in the European Parliament. She said:

“There is growing outrage about the way wealthy people are able to offshore their money so they can avoid paying tax. A strengthened anti-money laundering law – which requires transparency from financial and legal companies in the management of the assets of the wealthy – will help to tackle this immoral and often illegal activity.

There was strong support for a Green proposal for a public register of property ownership to show who is the beneficial owner of land and property. Dr Scott Cato said:

“This is a significant win for the Greens. In London and elsewhere dirty money is laundered through the purchase of property so it is crucial to have public information on who benefits from its ownership.”

Molly Scott Cato has challenged the UK government to declare their support for the measures as the country prepares to leave the EU. She said:

“We have already seen that [Amber Rudd was involved](#) in offshore trusts in the Bahamas and now we have had the Chancellor and Prime Minister [suggesting](#) the UK will take on even more of the character of a tax haven after Brexit.

“As a British MEP I will be keeping my eye on the UK government in the European Council, where the decision will be taken by qualified majority so

they will not have a veto.”

“But the government needs to realise that refusing to follow these strengthened EU laws on financial transparency could increase the destructive impact of Brexit on The City. This is because in order to register trusts in EU member states, or for clients in those countries, British legal and financial firms will still need to stick to these laws.”

Dr Scott Cato concluded:

“Today’s votes show that it is Greens that are leading on key agendas concerned with social justice and economic accountability.”

Notes

[1] MEPs on the European Parliament’s Economic & Monetary Affairs Committee and Civil Liberties Justice & Home Affairs Committee

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Green Party: Budget cuts and Brexit combined could bring UK to its knees



28 February 2017

The Green Party has responded to news Government departments will face yet more cuts [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“The Government is already asking its departments to do the impossible, with demands they do more with less, which is stretching the country to breaking point. By forcing through yet more cuts the Government is creating an ever increasing downward spiral, exacerbating need but removing the means to deal with it.

“The Conservatives are already punishing local authorities for its Government’s own failure, with the crisis facing social care just one example of the damaging impact its budget slashing is having on people who need help and support the most.

“Add into this mix the demands of Brexit and it is almost impossible to see

how the country will not be brought to its knees.”

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[Green Party: Government is targeting disabled to balance its books](#)



27 February 2017

The Green Party is deeply concerned by proposed changes to PIP payments, which will affect more than 160,000 people [1].

George Freeman MP defended the proposal by saying disability benefits should go to “really disabled people” not those “taking pills at home, who suffer from anxiety” [2].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“The Government by its own admission is targeting the disabled to try to balance its books. This ruthless and underhand move is designed simply to cut disability benefits, regardless of the impact on people’s lives.

“The Government is deliberately going against the two tribunals that ruled the payments should have more reach, not less. George Freeman’s defence of these changes was appalling and revealed a lack of understanding and nothing less than discrimination against people who face serious health conditions like anxiety. His comments are part of the terrible stigma that still exists around mental health, and reinforces it.

“With the Spring Budget approaching the Government should urgently reconsider its plans. This will hurt thousands of people, put up more social barriers and restrict them from going about their daily lives. Disabled people should not be penalised and forced to pay for a budget deficit which they did not create.”

Mags Lewis, Green Party disability spokesperson, said:

“Disabled people are already on the brink, having faced vicious cuts, confusing benefit changes, and Government indifference. Now the Government is planning to change the goal posts yet again. As a disabled person, I know these constant onslaughts cause anxiety, hardship, and terror to disabled people’s lives. Why are we seen as an easy target for cuts? We must unite

against this onslaught, fight in the courts and be heard by our Government. Enough is enough.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/benefits-cut-change-tory-pip-9906018?service=responsive>
2. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-39097019>

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[No new runways is still the only option, reveals new report on Heathrow expansion](#)



23 February 2017

Keith Taylor MEP: “Today’s report is an important reminder that campaigners have been right all along; Heathrow expansion is still a climate-wrecking decision that is bad for the British people and the planet.”

The Government is still not able to demonstrate that it can mitigate the destructive environmental impacts of a new runway at Heathrow, according to a [report published today](#) by the Environmental Audit Committee.

The report on Heathrow expansion reveals the Government is still failing to take into account major concerns about the air pollution, carbon emissions and noise pollution effects of expansion.

Responding to the findings Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East and a member of the European Parliament’s Environment Committee, argued that the report was further proof that ‘Heathrow expansion is an unnecessary environmental disaster in waiting’.

Mr Taylor, a vocal anti-airport expansion activist who has written about the [legal difficulties](#) a third runway will face, said:

“Today’s report is an important reminder that campaigners have been right all along; Heathrow expansion is still a climate-wrecking decision that is bad for the British people and the planet.”

“The report reveals that the Government has paid little consideration to the triple threat of unacceptable environmental risks the prospect of a new runway brings with it, from air pollution to carbon emissions and noise pollution.”

“A new runway will breach legal air pollution limits and further worsen an air quality crisis that the Government is already [failing to tackle](#). And there is still no answer forthcoming on any plan to reduce current levels of air pollution which are responsible for the unnecessary [deaths of 50,000 people in Britain](#) every year.”

“Expansion will bust Britain’s carbon budgets and make a mockery of Theresa May’s legal-binding commitments under the Paris Agreement. Astonishingly, the Government’s response appears to be its willingness to water down already dangerously-lax limits on aviation emissions, despite the recommendations of its own advisors.”

“Thousands of local residents will be appalled to read today’s report only to discover that not only will a third runway ensure the air they breathe is about to get more toxic but the Government has no plans to tackle the cacophony of noise pollution that expansion promises.”

“There are no two ways about it; expansion is a disastrous decision for the people of the South East, London, Britain, and the planet. Britain’s ‘airport capacity crisis’ is, and always has been, a dangerous myth driven by corporate greed, not by actual need. Not only is all but one airport in the UK operating under capacity, sponsoring the exponential growth of an aviation industry that is a [top-ten global polluter](#) is wholly incompatible with Britain’s Paris climate agreement commitments.”

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