

# Merry Christmas

Merry Christmas from everyone at the Liberal Democrats!

It is such a joyous time of the year. I have enjoyed watching the Christmas spirit spread across the country.

Watching Christmas trees pop up all around, the lights making the darker evenings sparkle.

It's a time when we can come together with friends and family. To sing, to eat, give and receive presents.

And, thank God for the grace and blessings we have to celebrate in our life.

Christmas time gives us a chance to reflect on the past year, whilst looking forward to a new one.

As I look to the future, I pray that we welcome a year of kindness and peace.

Although Christmas is a joyous time for so many, it may also bring added pressures.

I want to send my love and prayers to those caring for loved ones over Christmas. You are unsung heroes of our health system, and Christmas is a time when your acts of kindness and care are felt even more.

We hold in our hearts those less fortunate than ourselves. And to those who, this year, are without loved ones over Christmas.

Whether through loss or the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, if you are missing family and friends at your Christmas table, you are in my thoughts.

So, from my family to yours, I wish you a very Merry Christmas filled with peace, love and joy.

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# We can't afford more climate failures

Vital though they are, climate change conferences rarely deliver. Regrettably, Dubai's COP28 was another disappointing summit. Despite hype that the agreement saw "the beginning of the end for fossil fuels", the actual text was undermined with loopholes and flawed by the absence of timescales.

This sad reality was only confirmed by the most independent of judges – the markets. The share prices of the oil and gas majors didn't move.

And as emissions continue to rise and as the world continues to heat up, we just can't afford more such failures.

If the world is going to take action and make the agreements so desperately needed, then the next two years will be critical – and three things need to happen.

First, **we need to see nations deliver on their existing promises fast** – including the UK, where, like too many other countries, we are not on course to meet our own "nationally determined" target.

Second, **we need a huge international political effort** between now and Brazil's COP30 in 2025, to remove the remaining barriers to a dramatic shift in global direction.

Third, **we need politics and technology to deliver** the combination of leadership and confidence that made the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015 possible – the last COP that really did move the dial.

So how can the UK help make the difference in each of these three tests? And how can we Liberal Democrats work to make sure the UK steps up?



Domestically, we need to expose the climate hypocrisy of the Conservatives – and make sure the next Parliament votes for a radical step change in the UK's own climate action.

I'm sure I'm not alone in getting fed up of the Conservatives taking credit for the successes of the Liberal Democrats in Government, when **we nearly quadrupled the UK's renewable electricity, made the UK the world leader in offshore wind and embedded the policies that have seen the UK's emissions fall and coal power decline to near zero.** Given they fought us every step of the way, the Conservatives' hypocrisy is breathtaking – especially as they now use our success as an excuse for their inaction today.

**Liberal Democrat climate policies like accelerating renewable power rapidly and increasing energy efficiency investments dramatically are essential** if the UK is to deliver on our climate promises to future generations, cut energy bills and make the UK more energy independent. In contrast, at the next election, the Conservatives' willingness to speed up oil and gas extraction, enable a new coalmine to open and oppose solar and wind investments will enable us to make this case – we are the party of the future, they are the party of the past.



The second set of necessary actions need the UK to **embrace an internationalist approach** that's totally alien to the current Government. From working closely with European allies to reaching out to geopolitical adversaries, the UK must rediscover past active climate diplomacy that saw us influence capitals from Warsaw to Washington, and Beijing to Abuja. When I had the privilege of leading the UK delegation to 3 COPs and shaping both the British and European preparations for the critical COP21, the unreported work of my team of brilliant officials and the Foreign Office's outstanding diplomats was in my view essential to the successes achieved in Paris in 2015.

The climate diplomacy needed at this moment differs from that in one crucial aspect – the extremely challenging and urgent task of convincing middle and low income countries with fossil fuel resources that if they give up the future oil and gas revenues they currently hope will speed up their development, they can still enjoy a path to prosperity. We have to convince the political leaderships from Nigeria to Uganda, from Cameroon to Colombia that climate action can be *in* their national interest and that further fossil fuel extraction will be *against* their national interest.

Liberal internationalists must take on board Anatol Lieven's important insights in *"Climate change and the nation state"*, that wishful thinking that political elites around the world will somehow embrace altruistic global action because we ask them to, is dangerously naïve. A better response must see western democracies putting their own house in order and offering the generous support for development the UK used to do. Without such realism, future COPs are bound to fail again. To date, only the Liberal Democrats are offering any credible policies to make a renewal of Britain's global climate leadership possible for the run-up to Brazil's COP30.





The final requirement for success in the battle to stop global warming – the right combination of political leadership and technological confidence – is sadly not in the gift of any UK Government or Parliament, though an appreciation of its significance might still shape constructive actions.

Paris COP21 was partly successful because President Obama's diplomacy and the EU's unexpectedly strong climate ambition helped encourage China and India to move further than anyone had predicted. Combined with breakthroughs on the economics of solar power which gave countries confidence the transition would be more affordable, there was a happy moment where the politics and economics aligned.

Since then the politics have deteriorated significantly. **The threat of a second Trump Presidency and the relative success of authoritarian regimes have further undermined the ability of western liberal democracies credibly to persuade, incentivise and cajole the rest of the world into action.**

The march of **technology remains the brightest hope**. Policies that invest in the additional technologies we will need from clean flight to nature-based solutions, that share the know-how and support the deployment of game-changers like solar power and that switch the investments from dirty energy to clean may yet overcome the multiple barriers of vested interests of nations and corporates.

**Ultimately, to make those policies happen however, we need politicians who genuinely care – ready to put in the graft and capable of taking the political initiative. No-one can possibly still believe the UK's Conservatives are up to this. I am completely convinced the Liberal Democrats**

are.

*Ed Davey is the Leader of the Liberal Democrats. He was Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, 2012-2015, and led the UK delegation to three UN Climate Change Conferences.*

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## Happy Hanukkah

Today, on behalf of the Liberal Democrats, I want to wish our Jewish friends in the UK and around the world a Happy Hanukkah.

As you head into eight days of festivities, gathering with family and friends, I am sure there will be joy, light and laughter.

It is of course impossible to ignore the fact that this year, Hanukkah follows a difficult time. So, I am sure that as you reflect on the past year, amongst the joy there may also be a sense of solemnness. The darkness of the past few months will be felt, as it has touched everyone in different ways.

As the warmth and glow of the candles grow each evening, I hope it may serve as a reminder that even in the darkness, there is hope. Hope for a brighter tomorrow.

This week I visited the Jewish Free School with our spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, Layla Moran, to chat with sixth form students. We were both so heartened by the brightness and kindness that the students demonstrated. Together, we covered everything from politics to world affairs, including the crisis in the Middle East. The students showed such strength and kindness, speaking of how we can move forward together, using shared pain to build a brighter future together.

So, in the spirit of growing brighter together, from your friends at the Liberal Democrats we wish you a safe, bright and Happy Hanukkah.

[View video on Facebook](#)

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## **Lib Dems table new law to compensate sewage sickness victims**

**The Liberal Democrats have tabled an amendment to the Victims and Prisoners Bill which would provide compensation to those who have suffered illness as a result of sewage in the waterways of England and Wales.**

The new amendment comes in the wake of government statistics released on Friday, which found a sharp rise in the number of bathing water sites rated as "poor quality." The Bill comes before Parliament on Monday 4th December.

It would permit anyone who has suffered illness as a direct result of criminal conduct in relation to sewage to claim compensation. It would also ensure the government establishes a compensation scheme. It has been uncovered that water firms have discharged sewage illegally, including dry spills, where sewage is discharged despite no rainfall beforehand.

Conservative Ministers have let water firms get away with their destructive ways for far too long. There needs to be justice for victims of potential environmental crimes, especially swimmers and families simply wanting to enjoy beaches and lakes.



The amendment would cover the following, with the Liberal Democrats calling on water firms profits to fund the scheme:

- Provide for the payment of compensation to people who have become unwell as a result of bathing in water contaminated by sewage.
- Make provision in relation to the medical evidence required to support a claim for compensation under the regulations.

Water company CEOs are pocketing millions in bonuses whilst swimmers get sick. This cannot carry on. If someone is poisoned by sewage, they should be compensated for it.

With growing evidence of water firms committing illegal sewage spills and letting their sewage monitors remain broken, there is an overwhelming case to provide compensation for sickness.

The amendment follows a recent report by Surfers Against Sewage, which found between October 2022 and September 2023, a staggering 1,924 water users, including swimmers, reported getting ill after entering the water. This is triple the number reported in 2021/2022.

Water companies have dumped sewage for 7.5 million hours over the last three years, this including over 450,000 hours of dumps into England's designated bathing waters. Over the same period England's top water execs were paid £73 million, including £41 million in bonuses, benefits and incentives.



The Liberal Democrats have exposed the sewage scandal and will continue to stand up for the victims of this environmental catastrophe, this amendment will hold the Conservatives and water companies to account.

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## Stop Sewage Dumping

Tax water companies' huge profits and fix our sewage system.

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## **Strip Johnson of allowance and bar him from future honours**

Boris Johnson was never fit to be Prime Minister. He should reap no benefits, in money or in honours, for the disgraceful way he behaved in office.

**Rishi Sunak should strip Boris Johnson of his £115,000 a year ex-Prime Ministerial allowance and for the disgraced former PM to be barred from receiving future honours or a peerage.**

Johnson's actions hampered our response to the pandemic and led to so much unnecessary suffering for so many. He will appear at the Covid inquiry next week.

I cannot imagine what it is like for the bereaved families to have to hear every day just how shambolic and callous Boris Johnson's government was during the pandemic."

*Christine Jardine MP*

The inquiry has already heard evidence that the response to the pandemic under Johnson's government was chaotic and filled with a callous disregard for the lives of the elderly.

Boris Johnson's former Chief of Staff, Lord Listers, told the inquiry that the ex-PM said "let the bodies pile high" when presented with the prospect of a circuit breaker lockdown in September 2020.

The least Rishi Sunak could do is strip Johnson of his six-figure yearly allowance and rule out rewarding him with an honour or peerage for his destructive time in Number 10.”

*Christine Jardine MP*

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## **General Election NOW**

Join our calls for an immediate General Election.

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