

# Zack Polanski calls for action to protect food system from 'collapse' in speech to Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union

Green Party Leader Zack Polanski this week called for urgent action to fix a food system that is 'close to collapse'.

In a speech to the annual conference of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU), Zack stressed that extreme weather driven by climate change is already a "huge problem" for food production in the UK, and outlined concrete actions the Government should take to create a fairer and more resilient food system.

Days prior, Zack visited London bakery Hearth to hear first-hand from owner Maisie some of the challenges facing those working in the food industry.

**"We have a huge problem, and that's the climate crisis"**

Introduced by National President of the BFAWU Ian Hodson as a 'courageous politician', Zack started his speech by identifying a twin threat facing our society: the crisis of widening inequality; and the likes of Nigel Farage exploiting discontent to flame tensions in our communities.

Unlike the toxic division of Farage and co, Zack said it is the responsibility of "every politician who cares about this country" to bring people together.

Zack then moved onto one of the issues at the heart of his speech – and one of the biggest threats to our food system: "We have a huge problem, and that's the climate crisis".



Zack Polanski with Maisie Collins, Founder of the Hearth Bakery

**“You will know better than anyone all the implications this has for food”**

Referencing the extreme heat and severe flooding that are increasingly impacting life in the UK, Zack said “the new normal is going to get worse and worse... the climate crisis is here to stay.”

And he acknowledged that this was not news to anyone in the room.

Not only are workers in the food industry doing “one of the most fundamental jobs in the country: keeping people fed”, but they are also on the frontlines of the climate crisis. “You will know better than anyone all the implications this has for food,” Zack told the conference delegates.

From waterlogged fields and failed harvests, to disrupted supply chains and rising prices, to dangerously hot conditions for workers, the climate crisis is pushing our food system “close to collapse.”

It’s clear something has to change.

**A year of bread lost to wrecked harvests since 2020**

Farmers and growers are at the sharp end of the climate crisis in the UK.

Crops need the right conditions to grow.

But the climate crisis is making our weather less and less predictable: bringing both extreme rainfall that clogs fields for months, and more intense droughts that leave them parched.

As Zack pointed out, the impact is real and the numbers are stark.



Zack Polanski with Maisie Collins at the Hearth Bakery

Research last year found that almost 9 out of 10 farmers cited reduced productivity as a result of extreme weather. It's hardly surprising then to learn that since 2020, we have lost enough wheat to bake 4 billion loaves of bread – a whole year's supply – because of extreme weather wrecking harvests.

And this affects everyone. Alongside the financial hit and loss of business for workers in the food industry, we will all feel the impact in our pockets.

Citing recent figures from the Autonomy Institute, Zack outlined that UK fruit and veg prices could rise 170% by 2050, with Autonomy's CEO Dr Will Stronge warning that "within fifteen years, climate change will be the biggest single factor driving up the cost of fresh food".

From bakers to farmers to anyone running a small business – rip-off Britain is squeezing us all. It's time for a real plan to secure our food resilience: supporting farmers, bringing down costs for small businesses, and giving workers proper rights and decent pay.

– [@Zack Polanski \(@zackpolanski.bsky.social\)](https://www.bsky.social/zackpolanski)  
[2026-06-08T16:44:03.965Z](https://www.bsky.social/zackpolanski/2026-06-08T16:44:03.965Z)

**"There is nothing more serious than whether we are going to be able to feed ourselves"**

Zack is not the only Green drawing attention to our lack of resilience to the climate and nature crisis – and the threat this poses to food production.

In Westminster, Adrian Ramsay MP has been leading the way in calling for more action from the Government – including demanding the unredacted release of two suppressed reports on climate breakdown, biodiversity loss, and the national security implications of these issues.

A suppressed DEFRA report – commissioned to inform the incoming Labour government – concluded that without transformational change, our food, water and natural eco-systems are at risk from catastrophic failure from 2030.

Meanwhile a separate report from the Joint Intelligence Committee's found that biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse pose a direct threat to national security – including putting food production at risk.

Both reports have been suppressed by the Government, and this week Adrian challenged Keir Starmer directly to publish the two reports in full.

As you might expect, the PM's answer left a lot to be desired...

That didn't deter Adrian who, speaking to Andrew Marr on LBC, reiterated the case both for the release of the reports and for urgent action that takes the threat of the climate and nature crisis seriously.

As Adrian put it: "There is nothing more serious than whether we are going to be able to feed ourselves."

### **"The system is not working... We must make different political choices"**

The status quo is not working for the planet – or for people.

Speaking to the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, Zack emphasised that: "The majority of workers in this country are being exploited by this system that is working for the few and not the many."

And the food industry is a case in point.

While growers and workers in the industry toil in difficult conditions for little recognition or reward, supermarket bosses bank big bonuses as their shareholders rake in record profits.

As Zack put it: "The system is not working... as a result of political choice. We should and must make different political choices."

And he outlined what those choices could look like:

- A £15/hour minimum wage for all workers to tackle the cost of living crisis
- Free school meals for all primary and secondary pupils to support families struggling to put food on the table
- Support for farmers to adapt their practises to a changing climate to make UK food growing more resilient
- Stronger regulation of supermarkets to ensure farmers get a fair deal

for their produce

Whether it's challenging the Prime Minister in Parliament, or standing with unionised workers, Greens are working to make those different political choices a reality. As Zack said: "We do need to challenge power. We do need to change the status quo."

"Whether you're a baker, a farmer, a plumber or a hairdresser, you have far more in common with each other than with the Elon Musks and Jeff Bezoses of this world." [@ZackPolanski](#) speaking at the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union – [@BFAWUofficial](#).  
[pic.twitter.com/c6jcax5Eos](https://pic.twitter.com/c6jcax5Eos)

– The Green Party (@TheGreenParty) [June 8, 2026](#)

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