

ENVIRONMENT MANIFESTO

GREEN PARTY - GENERAL ELECTION 2017

Green  Party

INTRODUCTION

The Green Party is the only party that puts the environment at the heart of all our policies – because, quite simply, a prosperous, thriving future will be green – or not at all.

Our economic prosperity depends on the natural world. It is the ultimate source of everything we make and use – from food and materials, to the air we breathe. Even the digital economy depends on rare earth metals and huge amounts of energy. And we rely on delicate ecological systems to sustain life on earth – from bees pollinating our crops to trees absorbing carbon dioxide. Building a successful economy is not at odds with protecting our environment: it is impossible without it. Right now, we are destroying the foundations of our economy faster than they can be regenerated: we are eroding the ground we're standing on.

The United Kingdom has a unique and beautiful natural environment – from the magical Giant's Causeway to the idyllic South Downs, the rolling Northumberland Coast to the majestic peaks of the Lake District. Unfortunately, due to intensive farming, climate change, and other human

activity, wildlife and nature across this country is in decline. The 2016 State of Nature report reported that almost 60% of species in the UK are in long-term decline, while 15% are at risk of disappearing from our shores altogether.

This national picture is only a drop in the ocean of a global ecological crisis: humans are pushing at the boundaries of our planet. With 2016 the hottest year on record, and a climate-denier in the White House, the need for bold and dynamic action on climate change has never been more urgent. The UK must lead the world in building a green economy and investing in a viable future – one that respects and nurtures the natural systems on which we depend.

RESTORE OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND ENSURE EQUAL ACCESS FOR ALL

The Green Party would set an inspiring vision for the natural world, both on land and at sea, with thriving species, healthy habitats, and ensuring the environment is top of the political agenda.

A GREEN GUARANTEE IN BREXIT AND TRADE DEALS

From restrictions on pesticides to protect our bees, to crucial regulations on dangerous chemicals in toys, the Green Party will ensure that existing environmental laws are retained, or enhanced, no matter our future relationship with the European Union. We will ensure that important principles – such as the Precautionary and Polluter–Pays principles – are transposed into UK statute books.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT

We will introduce an Environmental Protection Act, this will:

- » Guarantee **strong protections for our natural environment and oceans**, especially for the Green Belt, National Parks, SSSIs

and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – and including a long–term 25 year target for biodiversity, water and air quality.

- » Create a **new environmental regulator and court** to effectively monitor and enforce environmental law – this would include new statutory requirements for updates to (and debates in) Parliament on the state of nature and biodiversity.



- » Promote a **network of new inter–linking local ecological spaces** on both land and sea, ensuring that both our wildest places and urban green spaces are protected and allowed to flourish.

NB: *Environmental regulations, monitoring and reporting would be negotiated with and alongside the devolved administrations.*

- » Establish a **right for every person in the UK to have access to a healthy and safe natural green space** promoting good mental health, physical exercise, and building community.

CLEAN OUR AIR

The UK is facing a public health emergency – over 40,000 early deaths are attributable to air pollution every year.

We would levy a one–off fine on car manufacturers who cheated the emissions testing regime, and introduce a new Clear Air Act, it would:

- » **Expand and strengthen a mandatory Clean Air Zone network**, empowering local authorities to take control of air pollution in their communities.
- » **Remove diesel cars from our roads** – including an increase in Vehicle Excise Duty on new diesel vehicles, and a scrappage scheme.
- » Promote cycling and walking through a **£2bn programme of investment** in healthy, active transport.

PROTECTION FROM CLIMATE CHANGE

Even if we cut global emissions to zero today, the effects of climate change will be felt for generations. We would invest in a climate–proof future – for example, by building flood defences, investing in natural flood management, including restoring uplands, to make every community safe.

TAKE BACK CONTROL OF OUR ENERGY SYSTEM

Our energy system is broken and is not delivering what households and businesses need. Captured by corporate profit, ripping us off, and fuelled by dirty energy that belongs in the past, it is failing us both as customers and as citizens. We need to harness the dramatically falling costs of renewable energy and seize the opportunity to both tackle climate change and take back control of our energy system. The Green Party would end the monopoly of the Big Six, and ensure that no-one is forced to live in fuel poverty – whilst also democratising the way energy assets are funded.

GLOBAL CLIMATE COOPERATION

We will stand alongside those countries across the world fighting for climate justice, and push for concerted global action to limit warming to 1.5 degrees. We would clearly outline how the UK would meet our domestic and international obligations – ending the current policy uncertainty – whilst making climate change a major foreign policy priority.

CLEAN, RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Green Party will breathe life back into the Climate Change Act by investing in an energy system fit for the 21st century. We will ensure that all new investment in energy is directed towards clean, renewable energy, and a smarter, networked grid, with battery-storage, demand-side measures, and interconnection. This would be detailed in a comprehensive Clean Energy Plan, and would include:

- » **Keep fossil fuels where they belong: in the ground.** We will introduce a ban on fracking, phase-out the £6bn-a-year fossil fuel subsidies, bring forward the coal phase-out date to 2023 (at the latest), divest public funds from the fossil fuel industry, and ensure a just transition for those communities dependent on fossil fuel jobs.
- » **End the effective ban on onshore wind** – the cheapest form of new electricity generation – and introducing **new support for onshore wind and**

solar-photovoltaics; scaling up **investment in offshore wind and marine renewables**; significant investment in vehicle electrification and charging infrastructure; and a comprehensive plan to decarbonise heat, including pilot residential and commercial projects.

- » **Create a new Green Investment and Innovation Centre** with borrowing powers to help create and finance the transition to a zero-carbon economy. This would replace the UK Green Investment Bank – a victim of reckless Conservative ideology – and create a government owned hub for innovation and investment in our low-carbon economy.
- » **End the reckless gamble with nuclear power** – we will cancel the contracts for Hinkley Point C (saving £37bn), and scrap plans for all new nuclear power stations, instead investing in renewable energy, a flexible grid, and interconnection to Europe.

A FAIR AND JUST ENERGY SYSTEM

- » **End the monopoly of the Big Six** by building democratic, locally owned alternatives. We will require grid operators to give **priority access to community energy projects**, and pioneer a new Community Energy Tool Kit to **empower local communities to create energy and municipal heating projects in every town and city.**
- » Introduce **progressive energy tariffs** so that small consumers pay less per unit than large ones, special needs are recognised, people are not cut off when they can't afford to pay, and nobody is forced to have pre-payment meters.
- » Embark upon a **national programme of insulation and retrofitting** to make every home warm – bringing two million people out of fuel poverty, insulating nine million homes, and creating hundreds of thousands of jobs across the UK. In addition, we will

ensure that all new homes are built to zero-carbon standards by 2020.

» **Democratise energy ownership** by reforming Tax Relief for smaller-scale projects, introducing Green ISAs, promoting Green

Bonds by allowing tax-free bonds for green projects, and issuing government backed Green Bonds – and requiring all projects that obtain government support to have a community ownership element.

FARMING AND FISHING THAT WORK FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET

Intensive agriculture and fishing has been disastrous the natural world – for example, it is estimated that the UK only has 100 harvests left because intensive agriculture has left our soils in a dire state. The Green Party will create more sustainable farming and land-use policies that are focussed on restoring the UK's natural environment – as well as ensure that reuse and recycling are at the heart of our economy.

A FAIRER FOOD SYSTEM

Our departure from the European Union presents an opportunity to move towards an ecologically sustainable farming system; one that focuses on supporting family farms and re-localising food production, thereby creating thriving rural communities. The Green Party will refocus public funding for the rural economy towards restoring biodiversity, sustainable land management and farming, improving animal welfare, and tackling climate change.

RESTORING AND PROTECTING OUR OCEANS

We will ensure the completion of an ecologically-coherent network of well-managed marine protection areas around the UK, and in UK Overseas Territories. In addition, any new fisheries legislation must contain a legal requirement to fish below a level that allows fish stocks to fully recover, should promote locally-led fishing that supports coastal economies, and bring an end to damaging fishing operations in protected areas. We will implement a Blue New Deal to regenerate coastal communities, harnessing the potential of our seas whilst protecting the marine environment.

END PLASTIC WASTE & PROMOTE THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

In the UK, 35 million plastic bottles are bought every day – that's 200 per person every year – and 44% of these are not recycled. This means 16 million plastic bottles every day end up in our environment, whether sent to landfill, incinerated or simply dumped in the countryside, parks, streets or beaches. The Green Party would promote



the culture of reusing and refilling, through: the introduction of a bottle deposit scheme; free public water dispensers and a community refill scheme; and an end to unnecessary single-use plastics. Tackling plastic waste sits alongside our long-standing commitment to creating a more circular economy – where recycling and reusing materials become central to our way of life.





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for the common good



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