

Application to be a public representative on the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee.

I have recently retired from work and in June this year, moved to Lowestoft from Norwich. From contacts here I have heard of the good work the Council are doing through the Climate Emergency and Ecological Committee. My working life was spent as a draughtsman/estimator/surveyor for steel structures and latterly part time retail work. However, more importantly, away from earning a living I've always liked to walk in the countryside, slowly, so I can observe the birds, mammals and their habitat.

I write this application on the hottest day ever recorded in Britain. The world is on fire. I've been passionate about cherishing the environment from an early age, however I have grown to recognise that solutions to the crisis we face demand "climate justice". That is, that the poorest in society are to blame the least, and that the very wealthy are those who carry the biggest responsibility.

Many years ago I was a member of Friends of the Earth. From 2013 to 2016 I was editor of the quarterly Green Socialist magazine. After that I was a founder member of Norfolk against Fracking, taking part in blockades of the Preston New Road (Blackpool) and Misson Springs (Doncaster) fracking sites until the moratorium was announced. Last year I was instrumental in forming an Environmental Sub-Committee for Norwich and District TUC. We did good work building for the 2021 COP 26 events which raised awareness of the multiple crises we face.

The declaration of a climate emergency is a big step towards getting everyone to look at solutions. Achievable changes within the scope of the council are well needed. Some people will be enthusiastic about those changes, others may be sceptical. It's a debate we need to have, but also we need to have speedy action. There is much to be done and I'm convinced it's at local council level, where representatives know their constituents that so many important steps can be taken in the most democratic way.

Not only do people need to be informed of the crisis we face, we need them all to participate in solutions and to lobby representatives in all tiers of local and national government for the policies and resources we need. Quite obviously we must stop burning fossil fuels quickly and replace those fuels with renewable sources. We need to take carbon out of the atmosphere by planting more trees and greening up the built environment. We need to make sure every home is insulated appropriately and affordably heated. We need to encourage people to go to more plant based foods and grow more food. We need to electrify and democratise everything using renewable power and at the same time have good public services and a good quality of life for everybody. Planning controls should ensure facilities are close to where people live so we can promote walking and cycling. Public transport needs a big expansion.

Nuclear power cannot have a part to play, however, given the local influence on jobs here, we must make sure all workers in this sphere have the chance to retrain in the renewables sector, with guarantees of continuity on pay and conditions. We need everybody on board in the fight against climate change and only government can give nuclear power workers these guarantees. The same would apply to oil and gas workers.

In short, to win the fight against climate change and to save our precious ecology we have to turn the world upside down. It can start in our own backyard, in our own home town. From gardens for wildlife to Greta Thunbergs “Fridays for the future : Youth climate strikes” we have to support them all. There is no more ticking clock. No more “one minute to midnight”. Studies are beginning to show we have passed the tipping points on climate and ecological breakdown. But we must not give up. I would very much like to be able to contribute to the work of the Committee. I think success for the committee can be measured in how many people we can encourage to participate in actions and events and in working with climate or ecology focused groups. We have to raise people’s sights and give hope and inspiration. However if I’m not selected I’ll still do what I can and also with the other avenues that are available in voluntary and pressure groups.

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