

**Meeting with Dawn Butler, Portcullis House,  
Westminster, March 31st 2025 - Points made by Brent  
FoE**

Present : Dawn Butler MP, James May (Dawn's Office Manager), Pam Laurance, Ian Saville, Elaine Sheppard (Brent FoE co-ordinators), Marie O'Connell, Paul Atkin (Brent FoE members)

**1) A bolder Fairer Climate Plan**

**Ian introduced this first topic :**

The government has to write a new climate plan.

The 2030 deadline is five years away..Therefore almost all the planning and delivery of the new climate plan must happen during Labour's current term of office.

We want Starmer, Reeves, Miliband and others to hear from MPs demanding action. By October (now deferred from May), we'll have an updated Net Zero Strategy and Carbon Budget Delivery Plan

**The new plan** -Must set out how we will meet the UK's international commitment to cut carbon emissions by over two-thirds by 2030. We're currently dangerously off track and urgent action is needed. The plan must be ambitious, comprehensive and fair, with policies that add up and enough investment to deliver them. And it must make sure that everyone can have lower energy bills, warm homes, clean air, better public transport and well-paid green jobs.

**Wider benefits**

Many of the people hit hardest by the impacts of climate change, in the UK and worldwide, are those who have done the least to cause the problem.

Fair climate action will bring significant benefits, including cheaper energy, warmer homes, more green jobs and reduced air pollution. We need to make sure that action helps everyone and not just those who can afford to buy a Tesla or fit a heat pump.

With the backlash against net-zero in some quarters (such as Reform and parts of the Conservative party), *it's vital that the government's climate plan is fair, and seen to be fair*. If it isn't, then it risks being weaponised by climate sceptics and those seeking to delay climate action.

Climate Change brings with it a great many health risks. So tackling it will bring savings to the NHS and reduce all the other costs of ill-health. In Bradford improved air quality is saving the NHS £ 30,000 per month \* **Dawn expressed particular interest in this point - air quality improvements and NHS costs.** \*

**Nationally** - Economic growth. One of the best ways to do this is to invest in climate action: The green economy grew by 9% in 2023, compared to 0.1% for the economy as a whole.

**Paul Atkin made the following points** : If potential green investment is put into arms spending instead it will not only make us less safe from the climate impacts it fails to mitigate (and make war more fightable and therefore possible and therefore make us less safe that way) but will also have a negative impact on job creation and therefore positive growth - leaving us in our current worst of all worlds situation of unsustainable stagnation. <https://socialisteconomicbulletin.net/2025/02/increasing-military-spending-will-not-raise-living-standards/>

Part of the upgraded plan should be to fulfil Article 12<sup>1</sup> (see footnote) of the Paris Agreement (which calls for Governments to actively publicise the need to make significant changes to avoid dreadful climate change) with a massive public information (and mobilisation) campaign, so that everyone a) knows what is happening and why and b) engages with the debate about what we do about it in a scientifically accurate and socially responsible way.

### **Ian stated that IN BRENT -**

Brent 2023 - According to government data, problems with Brent's **housing** sector are responsible for 41% of the area's emissions.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 12: "Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information, recognizing the importance of these steps with respect to enhancing actions under this Agreement."

*Making sure every home is effectively insulated, and providing grants for more climate-friendly heating, could help lower energy bills and reduce emissions. And it could ease the struggles many households now face because of the rising cost of living.*

Data also shows that **transport** is responsible for 25% of Brent's climate-wrecking emissions.

*Local authorities need to do all they can to encourage residents to travel by cycling, e-bikes and walking, as well as public transport, in order to lower emissions and improve air quality.*

**Stories** - *Ian and Pam's house in Neasden is now in a flood risk area which it was not when they moved in 25 years ago. One of our members, Nick, has found it impossible to get permission to add external cladding to his house which is in a conservation area - despite being willing to pay for it.*

*Our member Glenis, who is an asthma specialist, says that hay fever has become more prevalent, due to the warming climate, now affecting 1 in 4 people in the UK. It is a cause of reduced performance at work and school, with lower GCSE grades. Climate change has made the hay fever season stronger and longer and is resulting in new allergens, such as ragweed, appearing.*

And in its [2024 Progress Report](#), the Climate change Committee says:

*“The new UK Government needs to set out a clear commitment to the Net Zero transition, backed with rapid policy action and a sharp-eyed focus on removing barriers to deployment. This will build confidence for investors, businesses and consumers and create the right conditions for markets to deliver. Policy must also address the urgent need for effective and integrated adaptation action and be designed to ensure the transition is delivered in a fair way.”*  
(Executive Summary p14)

**\* Dawn Butler was given a copy of the recent FoE research, and was asked if she was willing to support a Bolder Fairer Climate Plan. She agreed for a photograph to be taken with her holding the FoE placard “Bolder, Fairer, Climate Plan Now”, with the others at the meeting. She later asked to keep the placard. \***

## **2) Stop Rosebank**

### **Pam introduced this topic :**

The Fossil Fuel lobby in the UK is huge and very active.

Uplift and Greenpeace won a court action in January against the granting of a licence in 2023 for oil drilling at Rosebank. On the grounds that the emissions from burning the oil once extracted had not been considered, so the approval was unlawful. *But new approval may be given if this factor is taken into account.* What is decided about Rosebank will also apply to Jackdaw.

Some Benefits of Stopping Rosebank - Green jobs, more affordable heating, reduction in air pollution etc.

Actions Dawn could take re Rosebank

- Sign Stop Rosebank pledge Show private support for #StopRosebank
- Publicly support #StopRosebank in media or press
- Raise issue of #StopRosebank in Parliament
- Show support for #StopRosebank on social media
- Write to *Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero* ministers opposing new oil and gas
- Write to Prime Minister opposing new oil and gas
- Sign Fossil Free Parliament pledge

**There is a long, clear, detailed, well set out MP Briefing: No new oil and gas from #Stop Rosebank at**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JS1xHIHGQXNfUspTMb6dZ4z6P8CMO1xgT1xsM86CA5o/edit?tab=t.0>

Pam offered to send this electronically. *And has done so.*

**\* Dawn Butler said she thinks she has spoken on Rosebank. She does not think a licence should be granted. She was shown the sheet and information about how to sign the Rosebank pledge. \***

**\* She said she agrees with the longer statement, she will just check the statement and is likely to sign up to this. She will also send this to Barry Gardiner to sign. She was interested to know about what Ed Milliband has said on this - we were uncertain. \***

### **3) RE HEATHROW / AIRPORTS IN GENERAL - Expansion plans.**

**Pam introduced this topic :**

The last decision of the Supreme Court on the matter was that expansion could go ahead. Gatwick and Luton have already submitted planning proposals for expansion. Heathrow is asking the Govt if plans for expansion might be approved IF submitted.

Labour has adopted 4 tests for approval 1) Carbon Emissions 2) Noise 3) Air pollution and 4) Is it good for the country's finances (or something like that).

#### **Other info re airport expansion**

There is a coalition of MPs, and organisations to oppose Heathrow expansion – Barry, Dawn and Brent are not (currently) part of it.

<https://www.no3rdrunwaycoalition.co.uk/members>

John McDonnell has pointed out that the Airport Expansion is said to be set to provide many many new jobs but, at the same time, it will require the demolition of a lot of housing so where will they all live?

Globally 1% of people are responsible for 50% of the emissions that come from flying.

80% of the world's population have never been on a plane.

The non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for planes are now also being noted as a problem.

**\* Dawn Butler said that she is against Airport expansion, and has been for some time. She does not think the expansion will happen anyway. She said there is**

already an infrastructure issue - with reference to the recent fire which caused much disruption. \*

\* In broader discussion Dawn said that the last government put the country back hugely with relation to renewable - this needs to be talked about. On the current growth agenda and getting this more strongly linked to growth through renewables, she said that more of this conversation needs to be happening. There is a need for discussion about different types of investment, by whom, and how to make this sustainable. In terms of housing development linked to sustainability she said that she has been asking for this already. \*

Elaine stated that she feels Brent Council has a responsibility as such a multi-racial borough to be doing as much as possible on reducing emissions and speaking up for this. Many people in the borough have families in the global south very directly affected by climate change. She mentioned a possible Brent FoE project encouraging people to talk about their families climate stories and how they are affected (in negative ways, and also any signs of hope through activism). Dawn said she was keen on the idea of stories as a way of getting messages across.

Elaine also mentioned the potential for Brent's MPs, who are all committed to climate change action, to work together. Dawn mentioned that she already works closely with Barry Gardiner MP.

[Barry Gardiner's article in \*The House Magazine\*:](#)



Pity poor William Russell! His response to the age of the telegraph was “faster horses”. In 1860, brushing stagecoaches aside, he created the Pony Express, which carried letters across America in just 10 days. By October the following year, the first telegram had flashed from Missouri to California, and the Pony Express was dead.

Labour's renewed support for Heathrow expansion in its quest for growth suggests it is looking for the solutions of the past to provide the growth of the future. Seven years ago, the Department for Transport embarrassed itself by its inability to produce a robust business case for the project. That was 50 years after the idea of the third runway was

first floated in 1968, and they still couldn't land a decent proposal without the chaos of relocating the M25, bulldozing two villages, diverting the course of five rivers and breaching our legally binding emission reductions targets.

Today, as companies drive emission reductions down their supply chains, and deals are done digitally, the argument that we need to expand a hub airport makes little sense. Already one third of Heathrow passengers are transfers, using the UK as a hub, and never setting foot in the country – or more importantly, spending any money in it. The UK's 'old economy' of aviation and fossil fuels grew just 0.1 per cent last year, while the green economy expanded by nine per cent. The Chancellor should find out where growth truly lies and how long it might take to deliver. If she really wants to “kickstart the economy”, a third runway by 2040 seems more like ‘kick the can down the road’.

As self check-in and automated baggage handling continue to decimate jobs in airports, it is the regional growth projects like the East-West Rail Link and the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor that will give rise to legacy jobs long after construction has finished. Yet the Chancellor points to the 10,000 jobs that will be created during construction of a third runway even though the Construction Skills Network tells us that we are short of 251,500 workers to meet the existing infrastructure projects through to 2028. In a time of skills shortage, Heathrow expansion will suck skilled workers and prosperity away from the rest of the UK directly contradicting one of the government's four tests.

The Airports Commission estimate that up to 28,000 more people would be exposed to unacceptable noise pollution above 70 decibels by a third runway, and 300,000 more residents would have flights over their homes. A third runway means 2,000 extra flights per day. Heathrow's neighbours face elevated air pollution: between 3,000 and 10,000 Ultra Fine Particles per cubic centimetre of air they breathe that penetrate every organ of the body including the placenta. So, more noise and more air pollution – two more of the four tests.

The independent Climate Change Committee, has stated that “for aviation, there is currently no credible way to reach zero emissions by 2050”. They recognise that to achieve net-zero, flying even at current levels will have to be offset by further reductions in other sectors. This means that remaining emissions from aviation in a net-zero world must be balanced by other carbon sinks, such as tree planting or peatland restoration. They welcome the progress in sustainable aviation fuel. But they are clear: “There's a limit to what can be achieved by technological solutions. So, a significant part of the story will be limiting the growth in aviation.”

Every new report tells us we need “urgent transformative action” because only one third of our targets for emissions reductions in the fifth and sixth carbon budgets are currently

covered by credible plans. It is right that Labour should present itself as the party of future growth. To do so, it should leave Heathrow's expansion firmly in the past.