

Old Town Green Party candidate

18 Goddard Avenue Swindon SN1 4HR

27th April 2016

Brian Gibbs

Swindon Equality Group

13 Greyweathers Avenue

Swindon SN3 1QG

Dear Brian,

Many thanks for your letter welcoming my comments on income inequality.

You point out that economic inequality is recognized as “a significant challenge” and that around 82% of the public think that inequality is too high. However whilst these findings are encouraging I do not think that the general public or the present political establishment take this issue seriously enough or recognise the huge problems of poverty and the huge (mostly secret) powers of the corporate sector and the multi-billionaires who control this globalised economy now. “Consumer driven growth” is not the answer.

Major measures are necessary locally, nationally and at a European and international level to grapple with these issues and to embark on effective remedies.

The Green Party campaigns “for the common good”. In the short term Greens propose that the living wage be increased to £10 per hour by 2020. A massive programme of investment in renewable energy and energy conservation is advocated to stimulate the economy as well as returning to the public sectors those services cut by government austerity measures that are clearly not working. The NHS should be kept as a public service and the privatised sections returned to the NHS. Similarly with education all academies and free school should come under the umbrella of local education authorities. The bed room tax should be abolished and a major housing programme of bringing into use empty property and increased new eco housing plus rent controls and longer leases for tenants. Renationalise rail and improve all public transport and reduce fares by 10%.

Taxation is a key issue and Greens propose to raise taxes in order to provide a civilised level of service by increasing taxes on the wealthiest 1% and introducing a Tobin or Robin Hood tax on large financial transaction and financial market trading. The HMRC must be greatly increased in size and powers and corporate tax evasion tackled with the same vigour as benefit fraud. The Panama Papers have only revealed the top of the iceberg of international corporate tax evasion by the use of tax havens. British dependencies tax havens are some of the worse. International agreements to

tackle tax evasion must be pressed for starting with country by country tax reporting by companies. The Green group in the European parliament is pressing for these changes in international taxation laws to hold corporations to account and reclaim the billions that are at present denied for our public services...

The remuneration of CEOs and top executives must be cut to bear some relationship to the wages of their employees. There is run away wage inflation at the top which is preventing the media (controlled by billionaires) to challenge the existing system.

In the long term with increasing automation and the rise of pollution, climate change and the depletion of renewable resources the ability of the planet to sustain an economy that serves the basic needs of the population will be impossible. Therefore it is essential that a guaranteed basic citizen's income is introduced for all people from cradle to grave. This will entail phasing out the present social security system and tax relief into one authority and by ensuring that all economic activity is for public use rather than the present outmoded neoliberal "free market".

To survive a tremendous change in thinking is required. We must work towards a steady state economy that is genuinely sustainable. I hope the Green Party can contribute to this transformation to create a better fairer world.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Hughes". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bill Hughes

Green Party candidate for Old Town.