

Basingstoke Transition Network

All questions sent by email for the 2019 General Election hustings held on Thursday 28th November 2019 at Christ Church, Chineham

The questions have been grouped by theme, anonymised, and made general to all candidates, and where this has required alterations to the text I have shown these in square brackets – Sheila Peacock, Secretary, Basingstoke Transition Network.

Recycling

What will you do to get Basingstoke Council to recycle more of waste we are producing, in particular, the plastic waste?

Climate Change and Environment

1a. Climate change scientists are urging us to reduce our energy use and eliminate fossil fuel use. They are urging that fossil fuel subsidies must be stopped and severe carbon taxes be introduced to "further restrain fossil fuel use". What relevant policies does each candidate propose?

1b. Climate change scientists are urging that carbon-trapping ecosystems such as forests and wetlands be restored and enhanced. What relevant policies does each candidate propose?

1c. Climate change scientists are urging us to eat more plant-based products and less meat, and reduce the one-third of food produced that is currently wasted. What relevant policies does each candidate propose?

1d. Climate change scientists are urging us to restructure our economies from one that is "overwhelmingly focussed on profit growth to one that takes in other goals such as the environment and greater equality". What relevant policies does each candidate propose?

1e. Sheila - the question on methane, soot and hydroflouorocarbons may be more up your street than mine, as I'm less familiar with emissions biochemistry. This looks like referring to use of the internal combustion engine, plus methane produced by bovine livestock ?

1f. Climate change scientists are urging us to stabilise population growth, calling for "approaches that ensure social and economic justice". An example of this would be the UK's support of contraceptive programmes in third world countries. What relevant policies does each candidate propose?

2. Is labelling climate change protestors 'crusties' conducive to a fair and reasoned debate, in a democratic society?

3. I suspect that many, if not all, members of the audience on Thursday evening will already be convinced of the fact that climate change is a clear and present danger to this country, and to all nations of the world, but I fear that many residents of this Borough remain unconcerned or unconvinced. How will the future MP for Basingstoke convince residents of the urgent need for change and what significant carbon reduction measures would he or she advocate for Basingstoke?

4. Will the candidate support the development of tidal range power in the UK to provide us with predictable and forecastable power?

5. Sir David Attenborough has said climate change is humanity's greatest threat in thousands of years. It could lead to the collapse of civilisations and extinction of much of the natural world.

The next 10 years are critical. We need to cut global emissions by 7.5% every year, however for the last decade global emissions have risen by 1.5% every year and show no signs of slowing down. If we carry on like this we could see global temperature rising as much as 4 degrees centigrade by the end of the century, which would be catastrophic for the planet. When are politicians going to prioritise the climate emergency? If you are elected what will you pledge to do?

6a. What do you see as the biggest obstacles for the UK in making progress to move to a low-carbon society and economy?

6b. If you could bring one Bill to the House of Commons on the topic of justice or the environment, what would it be for?

7. Will [candidates] take on board the importance of healthy soil, with its under ground "wild life", including earthworms, that help to keep us all alive?

8. What long term investment should the next government, with our money, to create a financial return within the next five years, enhance our social capital and deliver long term benefits for our great nation? [This question does not mention climate/environment but, knowing the questioner, I am fairly sure that these are implicit in the "long term benefits"]

9a. Would the candidates please outline how their party would manage the conflicting needs for:
(1) the UK population to increase in order to fill essential public sector vacancies (e.g. health care)
(2) the need for the government to have sufficient income to pay for these essential public sector jobs;
(3) the fact that England is already the most densely populated country in Europe with insufficient land mass to grow enough food for its existing population, and many of us don't want to see it getting any more crowded;
(4) its responsibilities to manage its own numbers as part of restricting global population growth

9b. Is it possible to solve the UK's current problems without a population increase? If not, under your party's manifesto proposals, what increase is projected over the next 5 - 10 - 15 years please?

10. How would the candidates like to see trade unions involved in the green agenda? What changes would they make to the law to allow and encourage workers and unions to reach their potential in "greening" workplaces and industry?

Cycling

1. Will you:

(a) raise long-term investment in walking and cycling to at least 10% of transport funding? At present it is only 1% and most cycle infrastructure is funded by developers of new housing. No new houses = no cycle routes. Vehicle Excise Duty (often called road tax) is not used for local roads, let alone cycle routes.

(b) tackle parking on pavements, yellow lines and cycle lanes?

(c) increase funding for highway maintenance esp. potholes, poor surfaces and overgrown vegetation? This impedes cycling and endangers people who do.

(d) Make 20 mph the default speed restriction in built-up areas (the higher the speed the more serious the injury)?

(e) Make cycling a popular mode of travel by providing the necessary infrastructure, so it is possible to make easy, quick, direct journeys regardless of age or ability? At present cycle routes are either non-existent or not fit for purpose. Standards vary from one Authority to the next.

(f) Fund strategic cycle routes and safe routes to school? Parents are frightened to allow their children to cycle. Motor traffic is the main deterrent to cycling.

(g) increase funding and availability of both Bikeability training and National Standard Instructor training? Make cycling part of the national school curriculum and the driving test.

(h) Create a national standard for cycle infrastructure (cycle networks, road design, cycle parking and cycle storage on trains)? This is variable from authority to authority.

2. My 7 year old [child under twelve] was recently run over whilst walking 7 bike across [busy suburban street] in Basingstoke. The helmet saved 7 and, fortunately, 7 is recovering well from 7 injuries. [child] is in good company because, firstly, other children that we know have also been run over in 2019 attempting to get to school; and secondly, we have all been told that no safety improvements will be made.

Will you help me to paint a zebra crossing? And, what are your other plans for safe crossing points?

3. If the government wants to take pollution and health seriously, then I suggest that her government should be encouraging people to get on two wheels. Will [candidates] consider legislation to bring electric bikes More in line with general permitted 20 mph limits in the United states? Fits in well without endangering people.

Other subjects

1. A key issue that has come to the fore is one of trust and integrity. To that end, can each of the candidates give details as to whether, in any job they have ever had, they have given cause for any investigation into misconduct, dishonesty or malpractice, including but not limited to: harassment, false expense claims, lying?

2. Given Maria Miller voted to reduce disability benefit by £30 a week, what would each candidate do to support disabled people in Basingstoke?

3. Chineham, and the surrounding area, are seeing a huge increase in houses being built (very little of which is "affordable" by the definition of the normal person). Unfortunately, the required services - nurseries, schools, GP surgeries - which are needed to meet the increasing population in the area are not following. How are the respective parties going to address this woeful lack of investment in essential services in the Chineham area, in both the short and long term?

Long Multipart Question

We've endured 3 years of Brexit and are still none the wiser regarding the potential national bottom-line income/expenditure actuals/projections of any of the trade deals together with the benefit you get from them.

However, the Climate Emergency and looming social collapse are actually a higher priority and require urgent radical wide-ranging actions to slash emissions and tackle gang culture.

We seek your leadership and commitment by example (to the world) in transforming society's decarbonisation per:

- * National enforceable No-Idling Zones throughout all areas
- * Ban the School Run with everyone on Green Electric Busses nation-wide to each school
- * Migrate all bus routes to electric nationally asap and ensure all rural areas are served
- * Fund compulsory national emissions reductions for all the installed 16M gas boilers
- * Tax frequent fliers
- * Tax UK originated internet shopper transactions
- * Replace all work-related DWP out of work benefits with Citizen's Income subject to much fairer assessments than at present, especially for disabled
- * Locally and immediately personally publicly plant a minimum of one tree per new home created within each new development
- * Slash emissions by halting rain-forest destruction ensuring undiscovered species can be investigated for new medicine
- * Immediately implement Proportional Representation and Promote Direct Democracy via mandatory randomly selected Citizen's Assemblies to prioritise energy descent adaptation on the path to all governance
- * Develop a "meaningful" challenging jobs programme (to include the return of local manufacture to build Transition Energy Descent Resilience) for all young people to especially inspire those who want to get on, rise above zero-hours and drugs culture, avoid grace and favour to hopefully become future entrepreneurs and job creators!