

General Election Hustings - Thu 5 Dec 2019

Prospective Sheffield South East candidates faced crucial questions at a Climate Change Question Time.

The event was organised by Sheffield Friends of the Earth and hosted at Rainbow Forge Primary Academy.



The Candidates, Picture Source: Lindy Stone

Marc Baylis: Conservative Party

Clive Betts: Labour Party

Alex Carrington: Yorkshire Party (candidate for Sheffield Central & standing in for Sheffield SE candidate Alex Martin)

Rajin Choudhury: Liberal Democrats

Kirk Kus: Brexit Party was ill so replaced by Tracy Knowles who is the Brexit Party candidate for Sheffield Heeley.

Many of the candidates who took part were happy to say they have signed up to the government Climate Change Policies. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/committee-on-climate-changes-2019-progress-reports-government-responses> I wonder if any of the candidates had read the policies?

A determined local audience demanded answers of their prospective Westminster representatives about how they would tackle the climate crisis.

The Candidates answered questions on the local hot topics of fracking and the development of green field sites for housing. Further discussion centred around the role of trees in capturing carbon, supporting wildlife and biodiversity as well as providing protection for the sort of whole-scale flooding South Yorkshire experienced recently.

Lindy Stone from the Sheffield Friends of the Earth group, which organised the hustings, said: "We were pleased with how seriously all candidates took the issue of the climate emergency we are facing and heartened by the fact that far more united than the divided the different parties. The world's leading climate scientists have given us the starkest warnings that, unless we commit to ambitious action on cutting emissions, we significantly increase the threat of further climate breakdown and this was recognised by all participants."

It was an open- and serious-minded debate about a range of climate and environmental issues & we were heartened by the way in which all candidates recognise that there is a climate emergency that must be addressed.

Many of the candidates said we should protect the trees and open spaces we have in Owlthorpe and if necessary, increase the number of trees to prevent downstream flooding.

I asked the question should Owlthorpe be preserved as an upstream nature-based solution to prevent downstream flooding? Clive Betts intervened and suggested that the flooding had been caused by logging high up in the pennines. The problem with Clive's theory is that the river that runs from Lady Bower reservoir, where the logging took place is the river Derwent that runs through Derbyshire, not Sheffield.

In the book "Flood", Professor Ian Rotherham explains the river Don catchment area and shares some thoughts and observations on the floods of November 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFyYr8HhSAI> "Fishlake's Chief flood warden, John Deeney, explains that the torrential rainfall from Sheffield had entered the river Don and headed towards Fishlake. The hightide had come and gone before the flood waters hit." If both events had occurred at the same time flooding would have been much more severe. The high tides in the Humber can reach about 4.5 metres. As the sea levels increase so will tidally flooding.

Some of the flooding in Beighton was caused by flood waters coming from the mine workings that run under Owlthorpe: [Ochre Dyke flooding](#) Ochre Deposits were found on the farmers land in Beighton also deposits were found downstream as far as Fishlake.

We looked on in horror at the deforestation that took place on Site E in Owlthorpe now Clive Betts MP supports the destruction of the Plot F the Grassland & Grazing project. Owlthorpe is a natural flood plain. If new Houses are built on the Grassland & Grazing Project this will increase the flood risk downstream.

We do need New Housing but they should be built on areas that do not increase the flood risk, such as the Norton Acrodrome, the site I suggested to Inspector O S Woodward at the planning enquiry regarding plot E.

Sheffield City Council have signed up to Climate Emergence: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/climate-emergency-response> But always revert back to their housing policy, putting prophet before the health and wellbeing of their constituents.

A big thank you to the 1,450 + who in such a short period of time, have signed our petition to Sheffield City Council: <https://chnq.it/6vXHqcGG4S> please continue to support our campaign and request friends and family to sign our petition. As we say on our website, public opinion is a very strong tool. It is by working together that we can change hearts and minds and curb the over-development of vital green spaces, especially when mature and valuable trees are threatened with the axe. Numbers are important: politicians take notice when they feel a sufficient threat to their re-election. For more information visit our website at: www.ecological-owlthorpe.org

Thank you for your attention,

Michael Meredith

Thank you to candidates taking part:

- Marc Baylis: Conservative Party
- Clive Betts: Labour Party
- Alex Carrington: Yorkshire Party (candidate for Sheffield Central & standing in for Sheffield SE candidate Alex Martin)
- Rajin Choudhury: Liberal Democrats
- Kirk Kus: Brexit Party was ill so replaced by Tracy Knowles who is the Brexit Party candidate for Sheffield Heeley.

The event took place at Rainbow Forge Primary Academy, Beighton Road, Hackenthorpe, Sheffield, [S12 4LQ](#)

General Election 2019 Manifestos: Final Scores

Related to the election, Friends of the earth combed through the party manifestos (and any additional pledges they've made during the campaign) to see how they score on tackling the climate and ecological emergency. These are the [results](#).