

Farnham and Bordon Constituency Candidate Responses

[Gerrard Hall – Reform UK](#)

[Alex Just – Labour Party](#)

[Claire Matthes – Green Party](#)

[Don Jerrard – Hampshire Independents](#)

[Khalil Yousuf – Liberal Democrats](#)

No response received from:

Gregory Stafford – Conservative and Unionist Party

Gerrard Hall – Reform UK

1. Describe any actions you have taken in the last 5 years which demonstrate leadership on climate and/or environmental issues.

By joining Reform UK I have added my voice to the increasing public calls for an end to the policy of Net Zero and all the punitive costs associated with it.

2. The UK declared an environment and climate change emergency in 2019. How well do you think successive UK governments have handled that emergency since then?

I think declaring an environmental emergency is a pointless example of virtue signalling which has not had any practical effect on anything.

3. In 2023 the Climate Change Committee gave the government a series of recommendations which they summarised in 9 key messages – which of these messages would you get behind in your first year in office, if elected.

I would be unlikely in my first year to make any of the recommendations a priority.

4. What actions to tackle the UK's biodiversity crisis would you prioritise in your first year in office?

I would be unlikely in my first year to make "tackling the Biodiversity crisis" a priority.

5. Will you support the Climate and Nature Bill? Yes/No

I would be highly unlikely to support the bill in its current form.

[\[back to top\]](#)

Claire Matthes – Green Party

1. Describe any actions you have taken in the last 5 years which demonstrate leadership on climate and/or environmental issues.

When I joined Haslemere Town Council in 2019 I fulfilled my pledge to work with the council to declare a climate emergency. One of the actions was to create a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency Committee of which I am currently the Chair. We have also compiled a Carbon Roadmap to tackle the Town Council's own emissions and partnered with Transition Haslemere and Love Haslemere Hate Waste to organise a Great Green Get Together, a community sustainability, wildlife and biodiversity event that welcomed 200 visitors, an event we are hoping to bring back in partnership with the Haslemere Museum in 2025.

I am also a Water Ranger and led the establishment of the Water Quality testing 'hub' for Haslemere. I am currently making the arrangements to carry out our first Haslemere E.coli test in collaboration with the River Wey Trust and Zero Carbon Guildford.

I am Project Manager of a community orchard project founded by myself and my husband in 2019, and we currently support communities to care for approximately 15 small orchards planted by us with and for the community.

2. The UK declared an environment and climate change emergency in 2019. How well do you think successive UK governments have handled that emergency since then?

I am disheartened by the lack of progress that the UK has made with changes and/or threats to changes to the Net Zero targets for the UK. There is a palpable lack of urgency.

Added to that the government pledge to grant 100 new oil and gas licences shows a deficit in commitment to reaching 2050 targets.

3. In 2023 the Climate Change Committee gave the government a series of recommendations which they summarised in 9 key messages – which of these messages would you get behind in your first year in office, if elected

*Immediate priority actions and policies Action is needed in a range of areas to deliver on the government's emissions pathway. I would particularly support this because some good measures are already in place with supporting legislation, but require follow up and implementation to realise the benefits but that can be gained from these policies.

4. What actions to tackle the UK's biodiversity crisis would you prioritise in your first year in office?

I would hope to replicate on a larger scale a new and innovative project being undertaken at Haslemere Town Council. I am the councillor leading a partnership project with the Haslemere Biodiversity Group and the town council to carry out a biodiversity audit of the land within the Parish that it has responsibility for. The Town Council is looking at its future responsibilities under the Environment Act 2021 and has instructed an Ecological Consultancy to conduct an ecological survey of each site and map the habitats using the DEFRA Biodiversity Net Gain habitat classification which is based on the UKHab Habitat Types. This work will also assess the current management regime and provide advice on how management of the sites could be improved for wildlife. If similar work could be done on a larger, Government-supported and funded scale with comprehensive mapping, a real picture of our baseline biodiversity will emerge with measurable areas for improvement highlighted with funding and resources targeted accordingly.

I am responding to a request from the National Association of Local Councils to write a one-page guidance document for other councils on how we went about building initiating and implementing this project.

I believe that there is the opportunity to create more job-related training to enable people to have good jobs at all levels that help the country deliver on climate and environment goals.

5. Will you support the Climate and Nature Bill? Yes/No

Yes, I have signed the Zero Hour declaration and intend to press Haslemere Town Council to join with the other councils who have already signed.

[\[back to top\]](#)

Alex Just – Labour Candidate

1. Describe any actions you have taken in the last 5 years which demonstrate leadership on climate and/or environmental issues.

I have been actively working to tackle the global climate crisis for over 15 years, starting in 2009 when I taught a group of young international climate campaigners at a Climate Advocacy Summit in Turkey. In 2021 I helped set up the Scotia Group, an independent team of former heads of state, political leaders, academics and internationally recognised climate and governance experts who held monthly online meetings to bring together ideas that could inform and enhance the COP process. As a senior member of the Scotia Group team I ran online climate dialogues, with partner institutions including the Alan Turing Institute, Harvard University, and the International Bar Association. In the last year, I have been fighting against the expansion of private jet flights from Farnborough Airport and am working with Labour colleagues in Rushmoor to ensure residents in the new Farnham and Bordon constituency have a meaningful say on future flight plans.

2. The UK declared an environment and climate change emergency in 2019. How well do you think successive UK governments have handled that emergency since then?

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto claimed that reaching Net Zero by 2050 was one of Tories' top priorities. But sadly, like many Conservative promises, actions have not followed the rhetoric and our communities have been badly let down with Rishi Sunak and his party:

- Removing the requirement for landlords to upgrade their homes for energy efficiency - leaving renters with higher bills as well as higher carbon footprints.
- Giving planning permission for a new coal mine in 2022 despite the UK government having led the charge in previous years founding the Powering Past Coal Alliance.
- Allowing gas drilling to take place in our beautiful Surrey Hills after the Jeremy Hunt failed to stop the Dunsfold project, which he claimed would "create enormous disruption and environmental damage for little if any economic benefit".

3. In 2023 the Climate Change Committee gave the government a series of recommendations which they summarised in 9 key messages – which of these messages would you get behind in your first year in office, if elected.

Locally, I would fight to ensure that no new oil and gas is developed in our beautiful Surrey Hills by supporting Labour's proposal that no new licences are granted for onshore fossil fuel development.

Nationally I am excited about Labour's plans to set up Great British Energy - a taxpayer owned company which will invest massively in home-grown renewable energy, using what Britain has in abundance: wind and water. Energy security will

stop our energy bills being at the mercy of foreign powers.

4. What actions to tackle the UK's biodiversity crisis would you prioritise in your first year in office?

I will ensure that the sewage crisis which blights our freshwater and coastal ecosystems is tackled as an absolute priority - Labour would bring in new legislation to ensure companies polluting our waterways are always, automatically held to account.

Locally, I will work with local housing developers so that the Biodiversity Net Gain legislation is implemented properly, in partnership with some of the incredible local conservation groups we have such as Surrey Wildlife Trust.

5. Will you support the Climate and Nature Bill? Yes/No

Yes, although I am increasingly concerned about our ability to limit warming to 1.5C given the lack of government action and the rowing back on policies that we have seen recently by the Conservatives. I would expect a Labour Government to engage with the Committee on Climate Change to understand the feasibility of a 1.5C pathway from our current position.

[\[back to top\]](#)

Don Jerrard – Hampshire Independents

1. Describe any actions you have taken in the last 5 years which demonstrate leadership on climate and/or environmental issues.

In my role as Chairman of the Planning Committee of two parish councils and in working on planning matters generally I have constantly emphasised the need to take account of climate and environmental issues.

2. The UK declared an environment and climate change emergency in 2019. How well do you think successive UK governments have handled that emergency since then?

Since 2019 we have only had Conservative governments. I think they have always been guided primarily by economic considerations particularly when it affects their own supporters. I do not think Labour would be any better. That is why I consider it so important that we should change our electoral system and start reaching some compromises on how to proceed.

3. In 2023 the Climate Change Committee gave the government a series of recommendations which they summarised in 9 key messages – which of these messages would you get behind in your first year in office, if elected.

I confess to being annoyed when MPs seem to think they have an answer to everything. I certainly don't. I know about digital technology and I know about the justice system. I may be very interested in environmental issues but I would leave it to those who know more about the detail than I ever could to put forward their proposals and try and help move things forward by compromise and consensus.

4. What actions to tackle the UK's biodiversity crisis would you prioritise in your first year in office?

Because of my own experience I would want to prioritise changes to the planning system which put climate and environmental considerations as the most important factors.

5. Will you support the Climate and Nature Bill? Yes/No

Yes. I note that the sponsor of the Bill is a Labour member and that the first named supporters are the Leader of the Green Party and the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats. This is exactly the sort of cross party agreement which we should always be seeing. But we won't until we break the tyranny of our current system.

[\[back to top\]](#)

Khalil Yousuf – Liberal Democrats Candidate

1. Describe any actions you have taken in the last 5 years which demonstrate leadership on climate and/or environmental issues.

As a renewable energy lawyer, as an adviser to the Embassy of a Pacific Island nation acutely affected by climate change, and as a charity sector volunteer, I have offered extensive leadership and contributions on climate and environmental issues. I have led on the development of a 300MW offshore windfarm project in the UK, the development of solar farms in Africa and India and potable water projects in Burkina Faso and Mali, leading on the establishment of projects between the IAAAE and Water Aid. Whether it is championing the planting of 100s of trees in Tice Meadow Nature Reserve or litter picking in Bordon or opposite my office in Farnham, the protection of our environment has always been high on my list.

2. The UK declared an environment and climate change emergency in 2019.

How well do you think

successive UK governments have handled that emergency since then?

Poorly. Climate change is an existential threat. Soaring temperatures leading to wildfires, floods, droughts and rising sea levels are affecting millions of people directly, and billions more through falling food production and rising prices. Urgent action is needed – in the UK and around the world – to achieve net zero and avert catastrophe.

The Conservative Government has failed to act with anything close to the speed or ambition these challenges demand. We have seen the Conservatives rowing back on previous commitments even when the Climate Change Committee warns that they are not on track to meet legally binding targets. I will support taking the bold, urgent action needed to tackle climate change. Liberal Democrats are committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2045 at the latest. We can make the UK a world leader again in climate change policy but also a world leader in the clean technologies of the future.

3. In 2023 the Climate Change Committee gave the government a series of recommendations which they summarised in 9 key messages – which of these messages would you get behind in your first year in office, if elected.

All of them. I share the Committee's concerns that the Conservative Government has been acting too slowly, and has lost its international leadership position. Worse, they have weakened a number of their earlier commitments. The nine messages are not

alternatives: all should be pursued. I am pleased that the Supreme Court has recently ruled that Surrey County Council should have assessed downstream greenhouse gas emissions in the Environmental Impact Assessment in deciding to grant planning permission for a development to extract oil.

4. What actions to tackle the UK's biodiversity crisis would you prioritise in your first year in office?

We must immediately take action dumping of sewage by transforming water companies into public benefit companies, banning bonuses for water bosses until discharges and leaks end, and replacing Ofwat with a tough new regulator with new powers to prevent sewage dumps. We must strengthen the Office for Environmental Protection and provide more funding to the Environment Agency and Natural England to help protect our environment and enforce environmental laws.

And we must set meaningful and binding targets to stop the decline of our natural environment and 'double nature 'by 2050: doubling the size of the Protected Area Network, doubling the area of most important wildlife habitats, doubling the abundance of species and doubling woodland cover by 2050.

5. Will you support the Climate and Nature Bill? Yes/No

Yes.

[\[back to top\]](#)

June 2024