

Cleo Lake

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Statement

I joined as a member in 2015 and was elected as a Green councillor in 2016. I have served as the Lord Mayor of Bristol 2018/19 and was second on the list for the South West region in the last EU elections. It has been a great journey with the Green Party so far, and one that I feel moved to continue with.

In deciding to run as Deputy I am very conscious of the political landscape for women and women of colour, which has been plagued with misogyny and racism but I will not be deterred. Representation is crucial and by standing I would hope to inspire other activists of various backgrounds to enter the political arena because I believe change can come from both inside and outside of the system and I operate in both spheres. I am both the politician and the activist, an insider and an outsider, a peacekeeper yet also a fighter, driven by an innate sense of purpose and conviction on a lifelong quest for justice.

I believe that I will bring a level of creativity and diplomacy to the role. I have a lot of experience of doing press: TV news interviews, radio and print. I consider myself a people's person and I would relish the opportunity to connect with communities across the UK. I embrace diversity in its widest sense and I really enjoy meeting people from different backgrounds, something that was a highlight during my term as the Lord Mayor of Bristol. I believe in a Glocal (global and local) approach to campaigns and politics, understanding that small local gains can have a ripple effect nationally and even globally. Dialogue and communication is important to me, to form understanding and where possible a consensus, but we cannot talk forever, action through serious campaigning, lobbying, and education is crucial to meet the multitude of challenges that continue to be presented at home and abroad.

As an arts advocate, and creative, I would continue to incorporate an art element in my approach to leadership. Creativity is central to who I am as a person. Creativity extends past a dance move, a poem or a sketch - it is a life beat, an ethos, a way of doing things, a reasoned intuition, often an ability to see better and do better, to emerge out of a challenge with unprecedented responses. I see many of the policies and situations that occur via our current political system and government as being the dregs of outdated convention and to say we need a completely different approach is a 'right (no) brainer'! (Yes I like to have a laugh as well).

For me, the Green party represents the only credible opposition in the mainstream political arena with regards to:

Opposition to oppressive laws

Opposition to inequality

Opposition to inhumanity

Opposition to ecocide

We are not a single-issue party and we must do better to articulate the importance we place on social justice. We also need to push more for cohesion and unity internally, focusing on the things that we can agree on rather than being derailed or distracted by disagreements. I am a proud Bristolian hailing from the City that gave birth to the earliest incarnations of the Equalities Act namely the Race Relations Act of 1965 that came about certainly at least in part, via the Bristol Bus Boycott. However, it is very disappointing that in 2020 it is blatant that so much more still needs to be done to improve the conditions of those living on the margins and/or under the yoke of oppression.

The greatest challenges of today can only be achieved with collective work. We need to listen to others outside of the 'echo chamber' and listen to voices of wisdom. We must listen so that we may hear, listen so that we may understand, listen so that we can best forge a sustainable way forward for future generations. Spiritual leaders and indigenous communities often say it is important to trace back seven generations and forecast forward seven generations. That is to say, the decisions and actions we take today must be made in the context of considering seven generations ahead and sometimes we may need to go back to go forward.

I support the idea of 'Radical simplicity', meeting people where they are, making policies that are easy to understand and adopting a Glocal sense of being. I am a bold, brave, multi ethnic woman and mother of colour. I care deeply and fight hard whilst also finding moments of fun and joy along the way which is very important. I have a track record in politics and leadership and I want to work with you to transform the world.

"You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time."

— Angela Davis