

PRESS RELEASE 002



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BEGINS:

Heading:

PARC Against DARC Campaign 'turns up the heat' on candidates, as Tories and Labour remain silent on DARC

Body:

Following a packed public launch meeting at Solva Memorial last Thursday 27th with hundreds in attendance, the newly launched PARC Against DARC campaign issued a public challenge in a post on their social media to all 15 candidates standing for election in both the Pembrokeshire constituencies. Themed: "Pembrokeshire voters have a right to know", the challenge asks the candidates: "Where do you stand on DARC radar at Brawdy?" The challenge invited Pembrokeshire voters to email the 15 prospective Parliamentary candidates asking for their position on DARC.

PARC Campaign now tells us that only the Labour and Tory candidates remain silent on this issue, and with just a few days until polling day they say they are fully turning up the heat on the remaining candidates, saying that the onus is squarely on them to disclose to the electorate exactly what their positions are on DARC.

Pembrokeshire voters have a right to know

Campaigner Jim Scott added: "This isn't a difficult issue to formulate a position on, We have had responses now from all other parties spanning across the political spectrum. The silence is now deafening, especially from the Labour candidate Henry Tufnell who polls suggest will beat Stephen Crabb in the Mid and South Pembrokeshire seat."

"The new Ceredigion Preseli constituency boundary also falls within a mile of the proposed site at Brawdy, so this issue will affect both Pembrokeshire constituencies equally."

Turning up the heat

"We know from the responses we've received from all the other parties that they all have grave concerns about this proposed development: for example Cris Tomos, who's standing for Plaid Cymru in Mid and South, has told us that he wishes to help build the case for DARC to be taken to a High Court hearing. The Greens are also vociferously against it."

“All the information is on our website for candidates to educate themselves on the issue, so why is Labour, who are expected to win the General Election, remaining silent? They are duty-bound to disclose to their prospective voters where they stand on this before polling day rather than waiting till afterwards to reveal their Party’s position. The silence is so deafening now that it’s almost like they’ve been told to ‘keep quiet on DARC’. This is simply unacceptable for such a major issue like this, especially when you bear in mind that the incumbent Tory MP in 1992, Nicholas Bennett, was voted out over this very same issue following huge public opinion against it then too. It begs the question: “where are your politics, what are your politics? And why are you standing for public office ‘as a politician’ if you have none! Pembrokeshire people have a right to know your views on such a massive issue!”

All other Parties or candidates have sent responses to us and have told us they have been flooded with emails on DARC following the issuing of our ‘Candidate Challenge’ last week. We urge people to keep up the pressure and keep emailing the candidates via our lobbying page.

Here’s what the parties have said

Plaid Cymru:

CRIS TOMOS - Mid & South Pembrokeshire

“Please note that I officially support the campaign PARC against DARC.

Please let people know that I am happy to support a High Court hearing on the matter. We have seen several recent High Court successes to challenge big business! Let’s take the DARC initiative to the high court. I was involved and led in winning against the Welsh Government in the high court in 2004 to stop closure of rural schools that had over 80% occupancy rates!”

BEN LAKE - Ceredigion Preseli

“I am pleased to confirm my support of the campaign - I share the concerns raised by Cris, and indeed the local community.”

Liberal Democrats:

MARK WILLIAMS - Ceredigion Preseli

“Whilst this is outside the Ceredigion Preseli constituency, I would be very concerned to see this proposed development. Has any substantive impact assessment been released, and what would be the effect on the all important Pembrokeshire tourist sector?”

Above all else I question the efficacy of a proposal which seems to have galvanised most local opinion against it.”

Workers Party:

TAGHRID AL-MAWED - Ceredigion Preseli

"I wholeheartedly support this campaign. I grew up surrounded by war and conflict and I refuse to allow it in the region where I live.

I am 100% against it. We need to stop the war machine and creeping militarisation. I would happily become a patron for the campaign as I am committed to demilitarization of the region."

Reform:

STUART JAMES MARCHANT - Mid and South Pembrokeshire

"From what I know now and from what I have seen I would oppose these installations.

I feel that not enough is known about the health impacts that maybe created for our constituents from their presence.

Unless I was totally convinced that they were safe (and felt that the majority of people agreed with that view) then I would vocally oppose them being placed within our constituency.

I do not believe that these installations would be good for Pembrokeshire based upon what I have learnt now. I would hope that expert opinion may convince us of the need and safety in the future but if I were to decide now then I would oppose these."

Green Party

JAMES PURCHASE - Mid & South Pembrokeshire

In full support of PARC Against DARC

TOMOS BARLOW - Ceredigion Preseli

"I am happy to officially support the campaign PARC Against DARC.

I'm extremely concerned about the geopolitical implications of the arrangements and see no local benefits. I'm 100% against the radar plans and 100% against DARC."

ANTHONY SLAUGHTER, leader of Wales Green Party, said, "Wales Green Party fully supports the PARC campaign and will work together with them and others to resist the proposed Deep Space Advanced Radar Concept (DARC) being built in Pembrokeshire. The proposed facility will make this part of Wales vulnerable to future attacks as part of any resulting conflict triggered by its use and represents an unacceptable militarisation of space. In an increasingly unstable world with multiple conflicts raging across the globe and impacting heavily on the poorest and most vulnerable communities the UK government should not be cooperating in this drive to extend these wars into space. Governments at every level have a duty to work towards creating a fairer, more equal and peaceful world for future generations and should play no part in this dangerous escalation of warmongering.

We also note the potential health risks and environmental damage that this project would cause which also underline the urgent need for this campaign to be supported at both local and national levels.'

Conservatives

STEPHEN CRABB - Mid & South Pembrokeshire

No response, despite being asked.

ALED THOMAS - Ceredigion Preseli

No response, despite being asked.

Labour

HENRY TUFNELL - Mid & South Pembrokeshire

"I have not stated any position publicly or otherwise on the proposed site. My understanding is that we are awaiting the Environmental Impact Assessment and Town Planning application. I would also add that I have raised the concerns of local residents with Labour's shadow defence policy team. I understand that the site is of significant concern for local residents and it is important that their views are represented throughout the process."

Further email said: "The Chair of the Local Labour Party for Mid & South Pembrokeshire, is able to attend the public meeting on 27th and will be able to provide me with feedback on the concerns that you raise in the meeting. As I said in my previous email, it is important that the concerns of local residents are heard and I am sorry to not be able to attend in person."

JACKIE JONES - Ceredigion Preseli

No response, despite being asked.

Campaigners concluded: "If all the other parties can give us such robust and informed positions on DARC, why can't the two biggest parties? It is simply not acceptable for them to remain silent any longer." We urge everyone to email them.

ENDS.