# Labour donor Dale Vince’s public contracts and political contributions under scrutiny



A prominent Labour donor whose company has been awarded contracts totaling millions by the Greater London Authority (GLA) has drawn attention and scrutiny amid his significant political contributions. Dale Vince, founder of the green energy firm Ecotricity, has donated over £5.5 million to the Labour Party and its politicians while his company has secured more than £3.5 million in contracts to supply power to Sadiq Khan’s City Hall since 2020. The revelations raise questions about the intersections of political donations and public contracts, though there is no suggestion of wrongdoing.

According to figures obtained by the Daily Mail through Freedom of Information requests, Ecotricity has received over £3.5 million from City Hall for providing 100 per cent green energy since 2020/21. The GLA's current contract with Ecotricity, awarded through a competitive process managed by the local authority purchasing consortium LASER, is set to expire in 2026 but has been renewed annually since it began in 2019. Ecotricity characterizes its contract as small and unrelated to Vince's political donations, emphasizing the firm’s three-decade history of supplying green energy to the public sector. City Hall insisted the mayor and his team had no involvement in awarding the contract, which was handled independently by GLA officers.

Vince’s donations have notably coincided with his company's increasing financial engagement with public authorities. During the recent fiscal year, Ecotricity received over £1.3 million from City Hall, overlapping with Vince’s substantial donations to Labour ahead of the 2023 general election. His financial support extends to key Labour figures, including Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and deputy leader Angela Rayner. Although critics like Reform UK's Zia Yusuf have condemned the award of public funds to the firm of a major party donor, Conservative London Assembly leader Susan Hall said she would further scrutinize the arrangements to ensure value for money for Londoners.

Beyond his political and business engagements, Dale Vince is a well-known environmental activist and entrepreneur whose business ventures center on green energy and sustainability. Ecotricity, under his leadership, has grown into a major player in the UK's renewable sector with a turnover exceeding £450 million and a customer base of over 160,000. Vince’s activism includes funding controversial groups like Just Stop Oil, which he supported with hundreds of thousands of pounds before ceasing funding in 2023 due to concerns about their protest tactics being "counterproductive." He also backs organisations such as Extinction Rebellion and vegan advocacy groups, reinforcing his commitment to ecological and ethical causes.

The intertwining of Vince’s environmental advocacy, political donations, and commercial success presents a complex picture. His philanthropic and political contributions aim to advance green policies within Labour, reflected in his visible presence at the 2024 Labour Party conference and collaborations with Sadiq Khan on sustainability initiatives. For instance, Vince and Khan jointly headlined Earthfest, a sustainability festival, underscoring their shared environmental goals. Vince has publicly praised Khan’s leadership and policies, including the expansion of London’s Ultra Low Emissions Zone, for which the mayor received a political award sponsored by Ecotricity.

Vince’s substantial donations have also been a subject of legal and personal scrutiny. His high-profile divorce from his estranged wife Kate attracted media attention, with allegations from her side that Vince rushed the divorce to prevent titles linked to potential honours. However, a judge recently ruled that Vince’s political donations were genuinely motivated by political aims, not to spite his ex-wife. Legal representatives acknowledged the complexity of Vince’s financial settlement, which included a £40 million divorce settlement.

Labour has defended accepting donations from Vince despite his previous financial backing of radical environmental campaigners, asserting that his support does not translate into endorsement of all activist tactics. Shadow minister Nick Thomas-Symonds described Vince as a "legitimate person" to donate to the party. Vince himself has dismissed allegations linking Labour to groups like Just Stop Oil as media fabrication and continues to advocate for environmental causes aligned with Labour’s agenda.

Despite the political and public scrutiny, Ecotricity’s contract with the GLA reportedly followed standard procurement procedures, and Vince’s firm highlights its longstanding public sector presence. The story reflects broader tensions in the nexus of green business, political funding, and public accountability, with Vince’s activities emblematic of the evolving landscape of environmental activism intersecting with mainstream politics and commerce.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15033371/One-Labours-biggest-donors-contracts-worth-3-5million-Sadiq-Khan.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/54e32635-1600-4f4f-8d70-52b7c9b71447)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15033371/One-Labours-biggest-donors-contracts-worth-3-5million-Sadiq-Khan.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15033371/One-Labours-biggest-donors-contracts-worth-3-5million-Sadiq-Khan.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/09/green-energy-tycoon-gave-700000-to-labour/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/84186225-3789-42ab-8275-bd4245648d20), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-65764041)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15033371/One-Labours-biggest-donors-contracts-worth-3-5million-Sadiq-Khan.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/84186225-3789-42ab-8275-bd4245648d20)
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* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15033371/One-Labours-biggest-donors-contracts-worth-3-5million-Sadiq-Khan.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-65764041)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15033371/One-Labours-biggest-donors-contracts-worth-3-5million-Sadiq-Khan.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15033371/One-Labours-biggest-donors-contracts-worth-3-5million-Sadiq-Khan.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/52e3b2a8-11a0-402c-a174-fff493785fcf> - A judge ruled that Dale Vince, founder of Ecotricity, did not donate over £5 million to the UK Labour Party to spite his ex-wife, Kate. Despite awarding her over £40 million in their divorce settlement, the judge concluded that Vince's donations were politically motivated and not intended to affect the divorce proceedings. Vince expressed satisfaction with the ruling and highlighted that he had originally offered a larger settlement to his ex-wife, which she ultimately received less due to legal costs. Kate's lawyer acknowledged Vince's contributions to the community and stated that the settlement recognized her client's significant contributions during their marriage.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/84186225-3789-42ab-8275-bd4245648d20> - Dale Vince, founder of Ecotricity and one of Britain’s most unorthodox entrepreneurs, has built his life and business empire around green energy, sustainability, and ethical living. A former New Age traveller, Vince settled in Stroud in the 1990s and began pioneering wind energy with the goal of transforming the UK power industry. Ecotricity, which now has a turnover of £457.6 million and 167,000 customers, has funded various green initiatives, including electric sports cars, synthetic diamonds, and a 'green gas mill' converting grass into energy. Vince, a staunch vegan and climate activist, has made headlines for banning meat at his football club Forest Green Rovers and donating over £5 million to the Labour Party to promote green policies. Despite controversies—including a high-profile divorce, clashes with Elon Musk, and criticism from both media and industry rivals—Vince maintains a deep commitment to environmentalism, often advocating for plant-based diets and energy independence over traditional climate crisis messaging. Though not interested in parliamentary office, Vince remains politically and socially influential, challenging media ownership rules and pushing for alternative energy sources. His ambitions continue, including launching hydrogen-powered aviation and producing grass-based food, which he sees as the future of sustainable living.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/54e32635-1600-4f4f-8d70-52b7c9b71447> - The estranged wife of Dale Vince, a significant Labour party donor, has accused him of hastily seeking a divorce to prevent her from acquiring a title if he receives an expected honour from Downing Street. Vince, a green energy tycoon and founder of Ecotricity, has donated over £5 million to Labour, funding Sir Keir Starmer’s general election campaign. His wife, Kate, claims Vince’s intentions are to ensure she does not benefit from a potential peerage or knighthood. Her lawyers contend that Vince has been generous with donated money, diminishing their matrimonial assets, and seek compensation through the High Court. Vince’s lawyer, Lewis Marks KC, dismissed these claims as speculative. The judge, Mr Justice Nicholas Cusworth, indicated decisions on the divorce and financial matters will proceed in subsequent court hearings.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-65764041> - Labour has defended accepting donations from a backer of Just Stop Oil, saying it does not affect the party's views on the campaign group. Shadow minister Nick Thomas-Symonds said Dale Vince, a green energy entrepreneur, was a 'legitimate person' to take money from. Mr Vince's company has donated more than £1.4 million to Labour since 2014. Tory ministers have called for the donations to be returned, arguing it legitimises Just Stop Oil's tactics. Protests by the environmental group, which wants the government to halt new licences for the exploration of oil and other fossil fuels in the UK, include blocking roads and disrupting sporting events. Mr Vince said alleged links between Labour and Just Stop Oil were 'a lot of fuss' and being concocted by right-wing media, who he called 'desperate'. He told the BBC: 'I don't want to harm the cause - Labour's cause. I don't think I am either.' The entrepreneur confirmed he had a telephone call with Sir Keir last week, which was their second conversation. He said Just Stop Oil had not come up in the conversation but that he would not stop funding the campaign group even if Labour asked him to. Mr Vince said he would double any donation made to Just Stop Oil in the next 48 hours in response to 'right-wing mud slinging'.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/feb/10/ecotricity-gives-250000-to-labour-amid-existential-threat-from-tories> - Ecotricity, the green energy company founded by Dale Vince, donated £250,000 to the Labour Party amid concerns over the Conservative government's stance on renewable energy. Vince criticized David Cameron's government for harming renewable energy and the fight against climate change. The donation was intended to support Labour's green agenda and counteract the perceived threat from the Tories. Vince also expressed support for the Green Party, donating £20,000 to the re-election campaign of Caroline Lucas, the UK's only Green MP at the time. The decision to donate to Labour was met with some criticism on social media, with customers questioning the use of funds for political purposes.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/09/green-energy-tycoon-gave-700000-to-labour/> - Dale Vince, the green energy tycoon behind Ecotricity, donated over £700,000 to the Labour Party after receiving a £15 million government-backed loan during the pandemic. The donations were made through Ecotricity between 2020 and 2022. Vince had previously claimed £309,000 in furlough cash during the pandemic before giving the money to the party. The £15 million loan was part of the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) aimed at businesses affected by Covid. Vince's company, Ecotricity, has been profitable, benefiting from government subsidies for the Energy Price Guarantee and the Energy Bill Relief Scheme. Vince has also donated £340,000 to Just Stop Oil but has since cut ties with the group, stating that their protests were becoming 'counterproductive'.