ANDREW MARR:
The Greens had one seat in the last parliament and are hopeful of scooping up some more this time round, and then joining what they call a ‘progressive bloc’ with the Scottish and Welsh Nationalists. They’re all against austerity and Trident. Joining me now to explain the Green’s agenda is the party leader in England and Wales, Natalie Bennett. Natalie welcome to you.

NATALIE BENNETT:
It’s great to be back.

ANDREW MARR:
Looking at your manifesto and what has been said by the party spokesman for a while, I find it very hard to understand whether you think the deficit is a real problem that has to be dealt with?

NATALIE BENNETT:
Well what we think is that there’s been an undue focus on the deficit and less of the thought, consideration of the kind of society that we need to have. We certainly need to deal with the
deficit, our manifesto which will be released next week, the deficit is reduced over the term of the parliament. But we think about the question of why we’re spending money or why we’re borrowing money and we’re not doing it now, and you know the simple fact is at the moment we’re not collecting tax from multinational companies and rich individuals that could be paying for the essential public services. And we’re seeing so many people in our society struggling, and that’s what we need to tackle. 800,000 people who need social care, over sixty-fives, who aren’t getting it.

**ANDREW MARR:**
I understand all of that, nonetheless we are paying huge amounts of money – 30 billion pounds in debt interest, 1.9 trillion pound black hole at the moment – that does need to be dealt with. Which is why all party leaders, including you, are being asked okay how would you deal with it? You don’t want public spending cuts, your tax rises suggested so far are relatively modest, 60p rate and so forth…

**NATALIE BENNETT:**
Well what we’re announcing this morning is the 60p top rate of tax and that’s for people earning more than one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, that’s the richest one percent. But what we’ve also identified is very much the fact that HMRC’s very conservative figures say that tax avoidance and evasion is costing us 34 billion pounds. We’ve announced the wealth tax, which by the end of the parliament could be bringing in 25 billion pounds a year, a Robin-Hood tax on the financial transactions, 20 billion pounds by the end of the Parliament. What we’re doing is rebalancing our society…

**ANDREW MARR:**
Let me go back over some of those in that case. The 60p rate, how much would that raise?

**NATALIE BENNETT:**
That’s raising about two billion, that’s not…

**ANDREW MARR:**
That’s not very much, does that go directly to pay off the deficit?

**NATALIE BENNETT:**
No, the big focus for that is the fact that the inequality in our society which is a huge and rising problem, the richest one percent… So, so what this 60p is for is really to identify the fact that some people are taking too much out of our society, they need to pay back. In the Green Party we’re calling for a ten to one ratio between the top paid and the lowest paid person in an organization. Now, that’s pretty well cuts in at about ten times the living wage rate, and our course we want to see…

**ANDREW MARR:**
So a much more, a much flatter society when it comes to income. And you also want a wealth tax. How exactly would that work? Would people pay taxes on their Lamborghini, on their paintings on their walls, how would you assess, how would you collect a wealth tax?

**NATALIE BENNETT:**
The wealth tax would apply to people worth more than three million pounds, two percent a year, that would be a self-declaration. A lot’s changed in the world in terms of tax.

**ANDREW MARR:**
So people have to go around their house saying ‘that bit of silver is worth X amount, I now need to be taxed on that wealth’?

**NATALIE BENNETT:**
Basically people need to –

**ANDREW MARR:**
Optimistic view of human nature.

**NATALIE BENNETT:**
Well I think there’s a couple of things here that, there’s some really good research out of America showing that if people think they are likely to get caught in not paying tax they will declare fairly. And what’s changed really, you know the really substantial sums that we’re talking about are the money that’s been deposited in tax havens around the world, and there’s a new global transparency happening with that quite rightly, and that’s an absolutely critical area that we need to focus on. We need to rebalance this society. You look at the fact that even the IMF and the World Bank are saying that inequality are economic threats.
ANDREW MARR:
Let’s look at another couple of your policies. Did you have a flutter yesterday on the national?

NATALIE BENNETT:
I confess I wasn’t watching, didn’t know anything about it. What we want to –

ANDREW MARR:
You want to ban the Grand National, don’t you?

NATALIE BENNETT:
What we want to call is for a review of all animal racing, commercial animal racing –

ANDREW MARR:
But leading to a ban is what you want.

NATALIE BENNETT:
Well, want we want to do is a whole range of issues dealing with animal protection, so you know, the badger cull –

ANDREW MARR:
(over) I’m sorry I just have to say, do you want to ban the Grand National?

NATALIE BENNETT:
Well I can give you an exclusive preview of our manifesto which says we want a complete review of all horse and greyhound racing, that’s what’s in the manifesto.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Why horse racing? No animals have died in the Grand National now for three years.

NATALIE BENNETT:
Well I think you know there’s a whole range of broader issues around animal protection here we really need to talk about which is things like the badger cull, we want to ban…
ANDREW MARR:
(over) Ah I’m sorry, I’m asking about the Grand National.

NATALIE BENNETT:
…driven grass shooting. Well there’s a whole of issues here which really need to be put on the agenda, things like banning snares of animals, and also of course tackling factory, factory farmings.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) OK, those are very different issues from wanting to ban the country’s favourite horse race.

NATALIE BENNETT:
Well what we’re calling for is a complete review tackling the animal protection issues.

ANDREW MARR:
Including for horse racing and what I’m asking you is why including for horse racing?

NATALIE BENNETT:
Well because there are clearly animal protection issues there that need to be addressed.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Which ones?

NATALIE BENNETT:
The fact of, not just what happens in races but what happens to the animals, the animals that disappear from the system, the whole range of issues. But you know this is a much broader issue and factory farming is something I’m at least going to get the two words in there.

ANDREW MARR:
Get the two words in there. Now, you want to be part of this, as it were, broad coalition with the SNP and Plaid Cymru. You might have influence therefore for the Green Party. What is your absolute, iron cast, I’m not going to say red line but I guess deep green line. What is the
one issue that would absolutely mean more to you than anything else in a coalition negotiation?

**NATALIE BENNETT:**
Well we’ve identified a range of issues and obviously anti-austerity, making sure that the poor, the disadvantaged don’t continue to pay for the greed and fraud of the bankers. And that means, you know, some of the things that have hit the disabled, the most vulnerable hardest, the Independent Living Fund, 18 thousand of the most abled –

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* In essence you’re the anti-capitalist party as much as you are the Green party now.

**NATALIE BENNETT:**
Well we are the party that says, ‘everybody in this society should have access to resources for a decent quality of life, and we have to live within the environmental limits of our planet. And I will point out that in the –

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* No, I think you won’t because we’ve run out of time but thank you very much indeed Natalie Bennett.