

EDINBURGH CLIMATE COALITION

A Guide to Climate Change and Solutions

Without rapid transition to a low/no carbon economy we face catastrophic climate change. For 25 years, governments have relied on the market to meet carbon reduction targets, with no success. After 26 years of climate summits, heavily lobbied by business interests, carbon dioxide levels are at their highest and fastest rising in 10 million years. Solutions must now lie with non-market alternatives.

HOW DOES WARMING WORK? The industrial gases such as CO₂ and methane form a layer above the earth that absorbs or traps sunlight, gradually raising the earth's temperature.

"Keep 1.5c alive". What is 1.5c and why is it important? Global warming is measured by how much the earth's temperature has increased since the industrial revolution (circa 1820). Warming is now at 1.2 degrees from that baseline. If we can halt it at 1.5 degrees, the worst impacts will be avoided.

SYSTEM CHANGE NOT CLIMATE CHANGE

"Keeping 1.5c alive" needs a political solution, that is, "System Change": Technology alone cannot fix climate change. Our political choices have created dependence on fossil fuels rather than harm-free renewables; transport planning that favours polluting car and plane travel; and 'economic growth' that maintains a consumerist culture through low-paid workers and high-income bosses. This must change.

TECHNO-FIXES: (The UK government preferred solutions) What are they and why won't they work.

Electric cars reduce petrol pollution locally but the electricity to power them still comes from fossil fuels. Unless electricity comes from wind and solar, it is not a solution. Meantime, electric cars require more toxic materials in extraction and production. Find out more [here](#).

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) structures suck CO₂ from industrial emissions, liquefy it then pump it underground for long-term storage. The International Panel on Climate Change notes that storage would be impermanent and risk accidental release. Greenpeace states it would cost 40% more than solar, 125% more than wind and 260% more than geothermal. Find out more [here](#). Technology at scale does not exist.

Nuclear Power: Stations are CO₂ free, but have six disadvantages: High expense, radiation accidents, waste disposal problems, excessive algae growth that kills aquatic life, terrorism risk and it is not renewable. Find out more [here](#).

JUST TRANSITION

Climate Jobs: A just transition ensures no one suffers economically or socially. Closing the coal mines unjustly wrecked lives and communities. We must not repeat that. Implementing a climate jobs programme would underpin a Just Transition e.g. large-scale investment in renewable energy jobs would guarantee job security (with paid retraining if needed) for workers in the fossil fuel and defence industries, as they switch to well-paid climate jobs. Critically, alternative government programmes to meet climate targets should be not-for-profit.

Retrofitting and Insulating: Retrofitting housing typically creates a significant improvement in the thermal performance and comfort of a home by improving the fabric of the building' Find out more [here](#) A programme of building insulation and retrofitting would end illness and anxiety caused by fuel poverty.

Along with democratic control and mass engagement these steps to reduce CO2 would transform people's quality of life and lessen the burden on the NHS.

Unlike 'green jobs' such as park rangers, climate jobs lead directly to cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, slowing climate change. www.campaigncc.org. In 2012 the Campaign Against Climate Change (CACC) developed a UK programme for transition to a low carbon economy. See full details here <http://www.campaigncc.org/> and here 'Unlocking the job potential of zero carbon' <https://gef.eu/>. Such a framework in Scotland would mean 100,000 new climate jobs.

MEAT REDUCTION Animal agriculture is a major source of methane gas. University research finds that phasing it out would be "our best and most immediate chance to reverse the trajectory of climate change". Just transition should support workers in the meat industry in changing to plant-based production. <https://news.stanford.edu/2022/02/01/new-model-explores-link-animal-agriculture-climate-change/>

TRANSPORT is Scotland's biggest source of climate emissions and the primary source of the air pollution linked to 2500 premature deaths per year. Around a third of Scots have no car (half in the cities), yet planning and public spending prioritise car ownership. There must be excellent reliable services in both town and country, with cheap fares or ideally free fares. Smart ticketing is essential. One double decker bus removes 75 cars from the road. Local authorities must ensure bus services are run in the public interest. **Active Travel** Access for all to excellent cycling and walking paths, to reduce pollution and enhance wellbeing. Quality infrastructure (segregated cycle lanes, widened pavements) should encourage far more people to leave their cars at home, or get rid of them.

Reducing Car Ownership Councils to support all initiatives e.g., car-sharing and city car clubs. So far, the Scottish Government has opted to spend billions on new roads, ultimately creating more traffic, congestion and pollution. We must campaign to have that money diverted to active travel infrastructure.

IS JUST TRANSITION REALISTIC?

Immense changes can happen at speed: For example, the creation of the Welfare State after World War II. The problem is political will. The UK Government is helping fossil fuel companies to drill for every last drop of North Sea oil and gas. However, under public pressure, the Scottish Government did change their position on the Cambo oil field prior to COP26 - but they are still permitting new fields; so our campaigning must intensify and diversify.

A FEW THINGS YOU CAN DO:

Policy change: Lobby your MP, MSPs and councils on ending fossil fuel use, public transport, home insulation and support for green jobs.

Reduce your own dependence on fossil fuels, use the car less, reduce flying, insulate your home

Spread the word: Raise the subject of climate change with family and friends, engaging them in solutions.

Eat less meat to help reduce dangerous methane emissions and spread the word to friends.

Join us or similar campaign groups such as Friends of the Earth, XR, Fridays for Futures or Stop Cambo.

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