



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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# Annual Report 2021

## 1. Background

The GJA was launched in 2010 to campaign around the issue of the jobs and skills needed to transition to a low carbon economy. Our work combines supporting local projects through to advocacy at regional, national, and international level. We are a loose coalition of trades unions, student organisations, environmental groups, and individual supporters. We believe that the need for worker / union engagement with the climate crisis means the GJA helps to fill a large gap between workplace environmental awareness and practice, and large-scale climate demands and policies.

[About – Greener Jobs Alliance](#)

## 2. 2021 AGM and work plan

GJA celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary at its AGM on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021. Guest speaker at the AGM was Paul Nowak, Deputy General Secretary of the TUC, and there were 60 attendees.

The work plan that was agreed at the February 2021 AGM set out the context for the coming year's activity as continuing to be dominated by the response to the pandemic, hosting COP26 in November, and a likely government policy of promoting market-led solutions to the climate crisis.

Within that overall context, GJA would seek to “unite the campaigns/coalitions and unions with a sufficiently clear and co-ordinated voice for it to be taken up by the opposition - not marginal voices within it - and thereby have an impact on government; either by forcing it to do more to keep face or stripping the veils away from its pretensions.”

Specific action areas identified were:

- Union Policy
- CoP workshop
- Green Jobs and Skills Advocacy
- Green Jobs and Skills initiatives
- Review communications and membership strategy

How these areas were progressed through the year is discussed in the following section.

### 3. Main 2021 activities

This section provides a non-exhaustive description of key GJA activities during 2021.

#### 3.1.COP26

COP26 in Glasgow from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 13<sup>th</sup> November was a ‘tale of two cities’.

The official gathering, hosted by an ever publicity conscious Tory party and chaired by an earnest Alok Sharma, was, as expected, a colossal failure in terms of meaningful climate action, characterised by:

- Tepid commitments to minimal change, completely at odds with the rhetoric.
- Reasserting the dominance of the ‘developed’ economies of the North and minimising the participation of the Global South.
- Watering down the commitment to end coal production and deflecting blame onto India.
- Allowing fossil fuel lobbyists to outnumber the delegates from any country.

Meanwhile, on the streets of Glasgow, elsewhere in the UK and across the globe, climate activists were engaged in an unprecedented level of protest and demonstration. The degree of anger and frustration, and the demand for radical change and justice, was unequivocally expressed by millions across the world. In London thousands joined the climate march on 6<sup>th</sup> November including an impressively large trade union bloc.

GJA involvement included attending an ITUC strategy day on 7 November showcasing union initiatives to achieve ‘net zero’ through a Just Transition and speaking at numerous events. The urgency is there to counter the official narrative embodied in the government’s so-called ‘net zero’ strategy and similar status quo-supporting efforts elsewhere from governments and industries.

By contrast, the COP26 Coalition trade union caucus has continued to meet, both in its localised and global incarnations, with a view to building on the mobilisation, solidarity and internationalism that was created in response to COP26 and taking this activity forward towards COP27 in Egypt.

More detailed reports on COP-related activity can be found in [GJA Newsletter 36 Jan Feb 2022](#).

#### 3.2.TUCAN

The Trade Union Clean Air Network (TUCAN) was set up by the GJA and the Hazards Campaign to provide a worker voice on air quality. We have continued to press for the inclusion of occupational air pollution as a key element of national and local air quality action plans.

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In 2021 the Environment Act finally became law. The section on air pollution fails to implement the standards adopted by the World Health Organisation so we will continue to campaign for better legislation. During the year TUCAN organised and participated in several events to raise awareness of the risks. We worked with Global Action Plan to support workplace monitoring initiatives and carried out projects with community groups to identify high risk locations.

### **3.3.Environmental Audit Committee Green Jobs Enquiry**

GJA provided a comprehensive written response to the Enquiry's set questions, spelling out our concern with a lack of a cohesive strategy for building the green workforce required, the absence of any plan for developing the skills needed, the need to engage trade unions in any just transition strategy, and the case for public ownership of key sectors of the economy evidence to best meet the climate emergency. These arguments were also provided verbally by Graham Petersen and Meg Baker (in her role representing SOS-UK) at the Parliamentary Select Committee hearing on skills held on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, highlighting the huge gap in green skills and the lack of a coherent government strategy to deal with it.

### **3.4.Legal framework**

GJA produced a document, *Outline legal framework for Climate and Just Transition at Work*, launched in September 2021 at the fringe meeting we hosted at TUC (see below). The document identifies the shortcomings of current 'voluntary' arrangements, draws a parallel with Health and Safety legislation, and argues for the enactment of a Climate Change and Just Transition at Work Bill, stipulating the content we would want to see in such a Bill.

Subsequent to the launch, we are reaching out to trade unions, NGOs and others to open a dialogue and solicit support in order to build widespread demand for a Bill that sets legal duties and rights in place on climate and for Just Transition. A small working group has been set up to progress this activity during 2022.

### **3.5.Retrofit**

The need to upgrade buildings in order to provide more efficient heating, in terms of generation and retention, and thereby also help to ease fuel poverty, became a high-profile issue during the latter half of 2021. In November GJA ran a special [insulation edition](#) of the newsletter. In conjunction with CACCTU, which presented a detailed chapter on retrofit in its [Climate Jobs](#) booklet, we have pulled together a working group of relevant experts to try and align the objectives of the many retrofit/insulation campaigns, local and national, into a cohesive set of demands to progress the issue. The number of workers needed, and the training in the skills required, for a systematic programme, makes retrofit a high priority for GJA, and one that is likely to pull in universal support from union leaders.

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### 3.6.TUC fringe meetings

There were a number of climate-themed fringe meetings held online at this year's Trade Union Congress, hosted by CACCTU (*Bringing Climate Justice and Worker Solidarity to COP26*), Trade Union Coordinating Group (*Climate and Workers Crisis*) and a TUC webinar (*Future-Proof Every Workplace*). GJA also hosted a meeting, on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September, *Climate Jobs Now!*, that included as speakers Rokhsana Fiaz, Mayor of Newham, and Bill Adams, Regional Secretary for Yorks and Humber TUC, alongside our own Philip Pearson presenting GJA's Legal Framework document.

### 3.7.TUC climate motion

One motion on the climate emergency was heard at the Congress in September, moved by GMB and seconded by Prospect. The full text of the motion can be found [here](#) as Motion 9.

## 4. Communications and Newsletters

In 2021, we kept up a two monthly schedule for Newsletters, with Breaking News updates in between. The Newsletter is the main source of hits on the website. It remains the only UK cross-union newsletter which provides regular information on the climate crisis with a trade union movement focus. We aim to cover key issues and debates, news on initiatives of or into the movement, key campaigns and mobilisations. The website has increased its reach, from 5,797 hits in 2017, to 8,883 in 2019 to 10,314 last year. High points tend to be in September - around the TUC and Party conferences - and November - around COPs.

We have an email subscription list with 623 supporters, a slight increase on the previous year. We have already had 1.4K hits in January as of Jan 23.

In 2022, it would be useful for supporters in different unions/NGOs that support us to set up a distribution system for individual contacts or appropriate in union email, Facebook or twitter networks where they don't do this already, so that we can get the widest possible routine circulation and make it essential reading for all trade unionists mobilising on climate change and all climate activists interested in the trade unions.

With the pace of climate breakdown accelerating, the intensity of activity, and therefore discussion (and disagreement) will intensify. Part of the search for unity is the exploration of difference to find the greatest possible clarity without anyone taking their ball home or crying heresy. We aim to provide a platform for honest, respectful debate on the new Blog section of our website, which has been redesigned, retooled and sharpened up for the decade ahead.

*Facebook and Twitter* - We should promote this more actively on FB and Twitter. We post Newsletters and BNs on FB when they come out. ATM we have 154 likes and 162 followers (up from 111 last year). The biggest reach was for the TUC edition of the Newsletter in September (194). The COP NL got to 83 people on FB and the insulation special to 70.

## 5. GJA 2021 Financial Summary

The GJA ended the 2021 calendar year with a **balance of £9,513.20**.

Details of the accounts are available for inspection.

**The total income for 2021 was £2,500.** The income continues to be affected by the reduced number of music festivals and contributions from our server teams. For the 2nd year running we received no income from this source. Our main source of income was from Unite who funded our newsletter. Money was also donated from the contribution to Unite's toolkit production.

We set up a donation button on the website and received a donation of £100 from Islington NEU.

**The total expenditure was £2,671.48** the bulk of which was for the newsletter and communications.

## 6. GJA Post Holders in 2021

Chair – Meg Baker (SOS-NUS)

Secretary – Tahir Latif (ex-PCS)

Treasurer – Graham Petersen (BWTUC)

Newsletter Editor – Paul Atkin (NEU)

Steering Group – Linda Clarke (UCU), Mel Evans (Greenpeace), Denis Fernando (Friends of the Earth), Carl Jerromes (Unite), Anna Markova (TUC), Sam Mason (PCS), Pete Murry (Green Party TU Group), Declan Owens (ELAC), Philip Pearson (Unite), Marianne Quick (UCU)

Web Designer – Wendy Mayes

Tahir Latif  
GJA Secretary  
January 2022

## GJA Work plan for 2022

During 2022, GJA needs to build on the threads laid down during 2021 and develop them further, acting as the 'glue' to bring together the many local, regional and sectoral campaigns that have sprung up around the UK on issues such as retrofit, future energy policy and public transport. We can identify the main contextual elements that will underpin the work plan as follows:

- *'Between the COPs' activity* - the failure of COP26 in Glasgow to produce meaningful proposals in the face of a retrenchment of the status quo, while providing a focal point for mass grassroots activity on a global scale. This activity needs to be maintained, including through continuing the COP26 Coalition caucuses, rather than lag until COP27 appears over the horizon,
- *Absence of national leadership* – regardless of the travails of the Conservative government at the time of writing, the past 11-12 years have been characterised in environmental terms by a huge chasm between rhetoric and action. This is unlikely to change and may deteriorate further as the likelihood is that a new Prime Minister is likely to have a more coherent ideological commitment to a neo-Thatcherite project that favours the interests of large corporations even further.
- *Government support for free market solutions* – such investment as is provided for climate solutions are likely to be refracted through the prism of the market, and to deliver profits to private companies that see 'green issues' as a source of commodification to be exploited rather than an object of public good. Like for like replacement of energy, transport and building works with more 'sustainable' materials will not alleviate the struggles of the labour force embedded in the system.
- *Continuation of the pandemic* – workers have been made to pay for the pandemic, and under this government will continue to do so, in much the way we paid for the financial crash. The situation has been extended and worsened by the impatience of corporate greed, supported by extreme right wing Conservatives, and as this is written, might be extended again if the imperative to 'get people back into the workplace' produces a premature abandoning of restrictions and essential support.
- *The need for an alternative* – last year's work plan noted that 'Labour critiques of this at national level are likely to be cautious and tactical, not strategic.' There is a need for Labour to advance a serious and comprehensive proposal for the climate that has not yet been forthcoming. The announcement at party conference of £60Bn in funding for a 10-year retrofit programme is extremely welcome, and GJA is keen to

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work with Labour on the mechanics of this. But a full-scale programme of action to combat climate change must be forthcoming as a key element of providing a genuine alternative to this government that inspires people to come out and vote.

- *Trade union policies* – the motion that was passed at the 2021 Congress highlighted the divergence in approaches taken by different unions, and the potential for regressing into a position that ends up supporting government policies by default. A genuine worker led Just Transition, including the green skills required to enable the jobs of the future, is supported by many unions and needs to become the focus of union activity, leading to the adoption of a more ambitious policy at TUC 2022.

Within this context, GJA activities to be actioned during 2022 must include (but not be limited to):

1. **Continue to develop existing campaigns** – this includes
  - i) *GJA Legal Framework* – the recently established working group to devise and implement a strategy for securing buy-in to the framework from unions and others, to establish legal rights and protections for green reps.
  - ii) *Retrofit campaign* – the working group to formulate a coherent ‘manifesto’ of retrofit demands that can serve to bring together the many local campaigns and as the basis for discussion with political parties.
  - iii) *TUCAN* – continue to work with other groups for better legislation than that which emerged during 2021.
2. **Green Jobs and Skills initiatives** – further develop and campaign for the green skills required for a climate-oriented workforce, work with other groups on local, regional and sectoral initiatives, highlight the educational needs for training in the skills required, and build on the modest outcomes of the green skills task force.
3. **Union policy development** – GJA is well placed to try and heal the current schism in union approaches to the climate imperative. As a first step we need to flush out the points of difference on issues such as oil and gas, nuclear, aviation, supply chains etc. We can use the new blog space to host considered and mature exchanges and, if the Covid situation eases, take these debates into public meetings to inform union policies, and including Labour and Green party conferences, and the TUC.
4. **Review communications and membership strategy** – this will include monthly meetings of, and report backs from, the Steering Group, increasing the newsletter frequency to monthly, and launching the new website with more dynamic and interactive capability to enable greater participation from supporters.



**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022  
12.00-14.00**

**AGENDA**

1. Introduction	Chair and Secretary	12.0-12.05
2. GKN Dispute	Frank Duffy/Des Quinn Q&A	12.05-12.35
3. Labour & Climate	Olivia Blake MP Q&A	12.35-13.05
4. Present annual report and work plan	Secretary	13.05-13.10
5. General discussion	All	13.10-13.30
(Optional additional discussion time		13.30-14.00)



Green Jobs ----- Just Transition ----- Employment Rights

**Annual General Meeting, Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 12.00-13.30**

Guest speakers on

Labour party climate policy:



**Olivia Blake MP,**  
Labour Shadow  
Minister for  
Climate Change

Worker led 'Lucas Plan'-style proposals at GKN:



**Frank Duffy,**  
Unite Senior rep  
GKN Driveline  
Birmingham



**Des Quinn,**  
Unite national officer  
Automotive sector

Q&A, discussion, debate, plan of action for 2022

Register for attendance at [Annual General Meeting - Greener Jobs Alliance](#)