



We need banners like this at every picket and climate speakers on every platform!

Editorial: Enough is enough. Truss on the skids

The scale of the crisis is growing. The floods in Pakistan and hurricane impacts on Florida show that climate breakdown is beginning to hit us on a bigger scale, accelerate and pile up, making recovery increasingly hard. The urgency of action has never been more apparent and we are in a period of damage limitation, in more ways than one.

Liz Truss used to work for Shell. It might be argued that she still does. It's no accident that the Truss government, heavily influenced by climate change sceptics, is imploding, thanks to its application of economic theories associated with Right Wing think tanks that share offices - and sometimes brain cells - with the **Global Warming Foundation** who exist to defend the over consumption of the top 1% and 10%, responsible respectively for 26% and 48% of global emissions growth since 1990 and whose rising wealth threatens to take us beyond 1.5C by 2030 regardless of what the rest of us do. These could well be described as *"vested interests masquerading as think tanks"* and they do indeed spend a lot of time taxiing from town houses in London to BBC (and other) studios *"to dismiss anyone challenging the status quo"*.

Borrowing to fund tax cuts and letting the fossil fuel producers off with no tax on windfall profits is the action of what one business investor called "a doomsday cult", with another commenting that buying UK Government Bonds now requires "a moron premium".

So, we have a government on the skids, and, as the pound sinks slowly in the West and Liz Truss scuttles from car crash interview to car crash interview with that frozen face and pocket full of lead balloons, anything they announce from here on can be undermined by the opposition simply stating "we will undo this".

There is a lot to undo.

Paul Atkin

RMT picket in Wakefield by Sally Kincaid. Banners by Catherine

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Quote of the Month

This is the undeniable truth of our age. It is cheaper to save the planet than destroy it.

Ed Miliband

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The TUC will now be held on 18 and 19 October.

For our full TUC Climate Motions (and motions with a climate aspect that hasn't been addressed) Round Up see our [TUC Special Edition here](#).

Trades Union Congress fringe meeting

Urgent action, long term solutions:

climate, cost of living and industrial action

This summer has seen deadly heatwaves, growing industrial action and huge increases in prices.

With a hard winter coming, and government failing our urgent needs and attacking our rights to organise, we have to confront these multiple crises by campaigning for social, economic and environmental justice.

At this meeting, trade union and climate activists will make the case that solutions to the cost of living and climate crises are inextricably linked, and for our whole movement to mobilise now around a clear set of demands to secure a just future for all.

Tuesday 18 October 5.45 pm
The Brighton Centre.

Speakers:

John Leach, *RMT*
Jackie Simpkins *War in Want*
Linda Clarke *GJA*
Tahir Latif *GJA and CACCTU*
Chair Suzanne Jeffery *CACCTU*

Organised jointly by GJA and CACCTU



Photo: Mika Baumeister/unsplash

Net Zero Scrutiny Review

Liz Truss has had a long association with the [Institute of Economic Affairs](#), which is calling for the Net Zero 2050 target to be scrapped.

Truss has appointed Chris Skidmore MP to run a rapid 3 month [review of the Net Zero target](#) to make it more “business friendly”. Skidmore is an economic libertarian (joint author with Truss and Kwarteng of “Britannia Unchained”) but is also convenor of the Tory back bench Net Zero Support Group.

His brief is to find “*what the most pro-business, pro-growth and economically efficient path to reaching net zero is*”. This may or may not be possible, but is certainly dogmatic: in that a “*pro business*” path is unlikely to be the most “*economically efficient*” way to do it. Unlike Deng Xiao Peng they are less concerned that the cat catches mice than that it's privately owned.

This government sees the path to growth via cutting regulations, including those to protect the environment. So, “pro business” is an imperative, “net zero” is

optional. This is likely to be a like trying to find the best way to protect the Amazon while still slashing and burning it.

Skidmore has, nevertheless, already put Jacob Rees Mogg's nose out of joint by stating that investors thinking about putting their money into fracking would be wasting their money in a “stranded asset” and would be better off putting it into renewables; while, contrary to what Truss and Sunak both said in their leadership campaigns, they have already had to unblock onshore wind.

This is a wobbly government with little support, and may not even last until Skidmore presents his report. Their consultation, which somehow avoids mentioning fossil fuels, is here and closes on Oct 27th. We will publish links to comments from other climate campaigns and NGOs on the blog. Whatever pressure we can bring to bear we must.

Ed

Party Conference Round Up

Labour:

Labour's backdrop slogan, "For a Fairer, Greener Future", and its pledges to stop fracking and new oil and gas exploration, make a dash for renewables and a serious long term directly funded insulation plan drew a clear line against Conservative backsliding. This will need to be campaigned on now to make it a reality. After the Labour Green New Deal motion was ruled out of order by the Conference Arrangements Committee, Labour passed a motion proposed by SERA which put the following programme for an incoming Labour government.

- Recognise a legal duty of care regarding climate change/biodiversity emergencies.
- Recognise international legal responsibilities.
- Offer a programme that shows global climate and energy policy leadership, working with UK nations, local authorities, FE colleges, businesses and unions to devise and deliver the training necessary for the skilled workforce required to achieve its renewables and energy efficiency plans.
- Support an immediate state-coordinated strategy for retrofitting buildings across the UK, to reduce energy consumption and household bills.
- Deliver the policy changes necessary to rapidly scale-up onshore and offshore renewables and prevent fracking and new coal mines.
- Invest in the maintenance and conservation of British peatlands to transform them into a carbon sink, reduce flood risk, prevent moorland fires, prohibit peatland burning and improve biodiversity.

This **Blog by Mary Roberston in Labour List** examines Keir Starmer's commitment to set up a publicly owned energy company in forensic detail that sets out further steps that would be needed to make a Fairer Greener Future a reality.

We invite contributions to this discussion for the Blog. Please contact us at gjanewsdesk@gmail.com

Greens:

Voted to support,

- Enough is Enough **oppose the anti trade union laws** introduced from Thatcher onwards
- support the right to strike for ecological justice
- support for a **£15 an hour** minimum wage
- for a **wealth tax and windfall tax backdated to January**,
- the **prosecution of those most responsible for climate breakdown**
- as well as calling for the energy price cap to be **frozen at the October 2021 level**
- for a state led home insulation programme
- the UK taking responsibility for its historic emissions and begin to pay compensation for climate-related loss and damage to the Global South.

FAIRER, GREENER COUNTRY

THE GREEN PARTY
AUTUMN CONFERENCE
30 SEP-2 OCT 2022

GREEN PARTY CONFERENCE CALLS FOR

- ✓ Emergency tax package including wealth tax on the richest 1% and loophole free dirty profits tax on oil & gas companies
- ✓ Nationwide insulation and renewable energy programme

TO PAY FOR



Retrofit

These articles on Leeds and the West Midlands show the positive impact of insulation on carbon emissions and bills, but also raise issues that will need to be dealt with to scale up

- the training of the workers needed to do the job has to include climate awareness, so they are working with a sense of mission
- relying on private sector investment to fill the gap between targets and delivery is a mirage without a long term national policy and investment framework
- the need to employ direct labour to sustain local connections and commitment
- how consultation bodies and different local government structures can be used to mobilise people in the active self transformation of their communities and whether Mayoral structures are a help or a hindrance.

We want to run a series of articles on the experience of insulation projects, how existing projects have worked, and what the results and problems might be. If you are involved in any aspects of any projects, please contact us at gjanewsdesk@gmail.com Ed

Retrofit in the West Midlands

Birmingham City Council has a plan to retrofit 60,000 homes by 2030. But the West Midlands Combined Authority's Five Year Plan aims to retrofit about twice as many in half the time: 292,000 by 2026. These plans were developed with little coordination between them, even though the population of Birmingham is approximately 40% of the WMCA's*.

The Combined Authority's coordinating role is set out in their Five Year Plan for 2021-2026:

"In order to ensure a cross-cutting approach to net zero delivery, it is proposed that a new WM2041 Net Zero Delivery Board is established that will: Take responsibility for the achievement of net zero goals across the region and advocate for the necessary resources and powers to achieve this."

But little coordination has taken place even on targets.

The deeper problem is that in practice the retrofit plans of both the WMCA and BCC are repeatedly blocked by lack of funding. The WMCA estimates that £3,853

million is required to fund the Five Year Plan up to 2026. But the CA's Environment and Energy Board announced in March 2022 that the total funding actually gained so far was only £26.6million, a drop in the ocean; just £1 for every £145 needed.

The explanation is that the Five Year Plan relies primarily on *"developing investable propositions to stimulate the market"* in private investment, and the problem is that this investment is not forthcoming, so the plan can't work. The CA's Environment and Energy Board report in March 2022 explained: *"Energy infrastructure spending is not aligned with local economic priorities which is proving a significant barrier to business investment."* In other words, business can make more profit by investing elsewhere rather than in the green economy.

What the WMCA doesn't say is that only a massive increase in Government funding can fill the gap. Which poses the question of what is Labour's strategy, both for the City Council and Combined Authority? Will the Labour councillors on the WMCA Board and the Environment and Energy Board now publicly challenge Tory WMCA Mayor Andy Street and demand a major increase in Government funding for home retrofit?



When the WMCA was set up on government terms it was agreed that

“The way we make decisions recognises the varied economic, political and geographical make-up of our constituent and non-constituent local authorities together with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and other key stakeholders. The WMCA makes decisions by consensus.”

A consensus on policies acceptable to a Tory government on the skids that’s moving away from Net Zero by 2050 at a rate of knots, their local representatives and the business representatives in the WMCA who support them, is no way to a “Greener, Fairer Future”. Putting plans in place and campaigning for the funding needed is essential.

**Ten Combined Authorities have been established so far, with two more approved, covering most of the industrial regions of England apart from London. The CAs have authority over strategic housing planning, transport, adult education and skills, and all aim to promote economic development in the context of Government policy, which includes climate, energy and environment issues.*

CAs represent another attack on local democracy, in several ways. They are more closely shaped and evaluated by Government than local authorities are, and much of their funding is dependent on satisfying Government objectives. They are taking over more and more of the regional functions of local government from local Councils, including aspects of climate policy. And the only directly elected voting member

of a CA’s governing Board is the Mayor, elected every 4 years. The Leaders of the local councils on CA Boards are not specifically elected to that position by their constituents. In addition, the WMCA Board has voting places for each of the 3 WM business-based Local Enterprise Partnerships, but no vote for the one representative of the Midlands TUC.

Finally, there are no elected assemblies to which CAs are accountable, so the citizens of the CAs have no mechanism to directly hold them to account, apart from the Mayoral election every four years. Consultation and ‘co-production’ mechanisms such as the WMCA’s Greener Together Forum and the planned Citizens Panel have increasingly become the favourite public management strategy of local government. Forms of direct citizen participation are vital, but also need structural public power in policy-making, because consultation is only advisory and can be overridden when it suits.’

You can read a longer version of this article [here](#).

Richard Hatcher



Leeds Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Project



Photo by WK

190 council homes in Leeds were retrofitted with external wall insulation, new warm roofs, windows and insulated doors, and air-source heat pumps. Where appropriate pv panels were fitted to roofs.

Works were completed early this year and initial data received from the contractor EQUANS suggest for a typical 51m² flat with pv panels show –

Work	Before Work	After Work
space heating demand per year	8365 kwh	3060 kwh
estimated energy bills per year	£637 (2020-21)	£424 (after 54% April 2022 increase)
CO2 emissions per year	2.8 tonnes	-0.1 tonnes

I don't have access to the final costs but the roofing re-rendering and windows were due to be replaced within the next few years so the real additional costs are the external wall insulation, the heat pumps and the pv. Spread over the scheme that cost might be between £20,000 and £30,000 per home.

I would estimate the project kept 20-30 people directly employed for six months, with a slightly smaller number in the supply chain.

The government's SHDF scheme is marred by dangerously short timescales and over-the-top paperwork. The projects are hampered by lack of trained workers, or simply lack of workers, and the usual trends in British construction to try to skimp, so that achieving a good result for the tenants becomes a battle and a labour of love (much unpaid time on behalf of architects and possibly contract managers).

But the above proves it can work, and that it's essential now.

Wolfgang Küchler

UNITE (Central Manchester Construction Branch) and URBED Retrofit Lead Architect (all views are expressed in a personal capacity).

\$12 Trillion saved by fast energy transition by 2050

This study published in September shows that the rapidly reducing costs of renewable technology - balanced against the increasing costs of extracting fossil fuels - makes them the best economic choice as well as giving us the best chance of saving ourselves from climate breakdown.

Chris Skidmore take note.



Photo by Nicholas Doherty on Unsplash

Air pollution

The elephant in the room that just isn't going away

Whilst there's so much to be concerned about in these turbulent times the ever increasing amount of published research telling us how air pollution negatively affects our health, from before conception all the way to the grave, isn't seeing the kind of urgent action needed that will lead to a massive reduction or elimination of the problem.

And, as ever, if the powers that be aren't doing enough, there are things we can do in the meantime. Trade union reps, especially health and safety representatives using their legal rights, are in a strong position to push their employers for action on poor air quality both in and around their members' workplaces.

News reports appear almost daily telling us that air pollution which breaches WHO standards is bad in this city, town, locality or region, and even WHO standards aren't "safe". And whilst efforts such as CAZs, Clean Air Zones, are being debated, sometimes implemented, sometimes rejected, they aren't solving the problem in themselves.

The news in recent weeks has not been good. At the European Society for Medical Oncology conference in Paris Prof Charles Swanton of the Francis Crick Institute and University College London, presented findings of how air pollution causes lung cancer. He focussed on how car pollution, notably fine particles, can affect dormant cancer mutations in the lungs causing them to grow into cancer. The research also gives evidence as to how and why so many non-smokers develop lung cancer, saying these findings should be a wake-up call on air pollution and its effects on human health.

And just today it was reported that researchers at Sun Yat-sen University in China confirmed previously raised concerns about the link between air pollution and the risk of early stroke, notably when WHO levels are exceeded.

TUCAN recognises the potential difficulties of getting employers to act on pollution from external sources but we argue that shouldn't be a barrier to employers or union reps raising concerns with the authorities or businesses who contribute to the problem such as local authority, mayor, transport company or authority etc. as well as addressing any issues with their own transport fleets.

Hilda Palmer of TUCAN and the Hazards Campaign has been giving talks to union reps on taking up the issue of outdoor and indoor air pollution with their employer and gives realistic examples of what can be done. Hilda points out different types of air pollution and suggests actions such as reviewing the performance of internal ventilation systems (is the right volume of air being circulated, is it being refreshed, are the filters suitable and doing their job properly) or even DIY filtering systems that are low cost and very effective.

Hilda will be running workshops at TUC Unionreps Connect 2022, a national training and networking event for workplace reps at Congress House in London on 6th October and her presentation is linked [here](#):

Mick Holder, TUCAN (Trade Union Clean Air Network)

People of colour in England are more than three **times more likely to live in neighbourhoods with very high air pollution**, putting them at disproportionate risk of heart attacks, cancer and strokes, according to research.



Photo: Charcoal Soul, flickr.com/photos/nicasaurusrex/

School Leavers Climate Literacy. The only way is up?

The first end of year **school leavers climate literacy survey** carried out with Year 11 students by the Royal Meteorological Society this summer shows how much work we have to do if our education system is to adequately prepare students to deal with the climate emergency.

- 5% say they have had *no climate related education at all* in Secondary school and 17% that they can't remember the last time they were taught anything about it. 54% say they have been taught something in the last two years, so 46% have not touched on the issue at all in Key Stage 4 including in GCSEs
- 40% don't know how much the climate has heated, and those that venture an estimate think it is higher than it is. This indicates that awareness of the effects of climate change that students see, in person or on the news, are presumed to require a higher temperature rise than that which we currently have.
- Relatively positively, only 3% think the primary cause of climate change is not caused by human activity.
- While 62% are very or fairly concerned, only 18% are very concerned and 33% are either unconcerned, don't know or prefer not to say. Concern matches how well students themselves think they are doing at school, with 74% of those who think they are doing well concerned, compared with 54% of those who don't. This confirms a remark made by a Secondary science teacher during the height of the school strikes in 2019. "Its all my top sets that are coming out".
- 59% think they will be affected quite a bit or a great deal and only 25% not very much or not at all, with 11% don't know.

This is not, then, in the words of Boris Johnson, "world beating"! Understanding and awareness is not universal or thoroughly grounded, with a strong sense that student awareness of the issues is picked up more outside school than in; perhaps from online sources that have caused some confusion. There is clearly work to do.

The NEU Guide to Decarbonising the Curriculum will be out next month, to address the point that teachers are not systematically taught much on climate change education either, in initial training or continuing professional development. Many will not have learnt any of this in school, and, without that solid grounding, teachers and parents worry about passing on negative messaging to cohorts of children who currently have high rates of poor mental health (including unaddressed "climate anxiety" as part of it). Teaching unions have demanded that this be put in place by the DFE; here is our prompt!

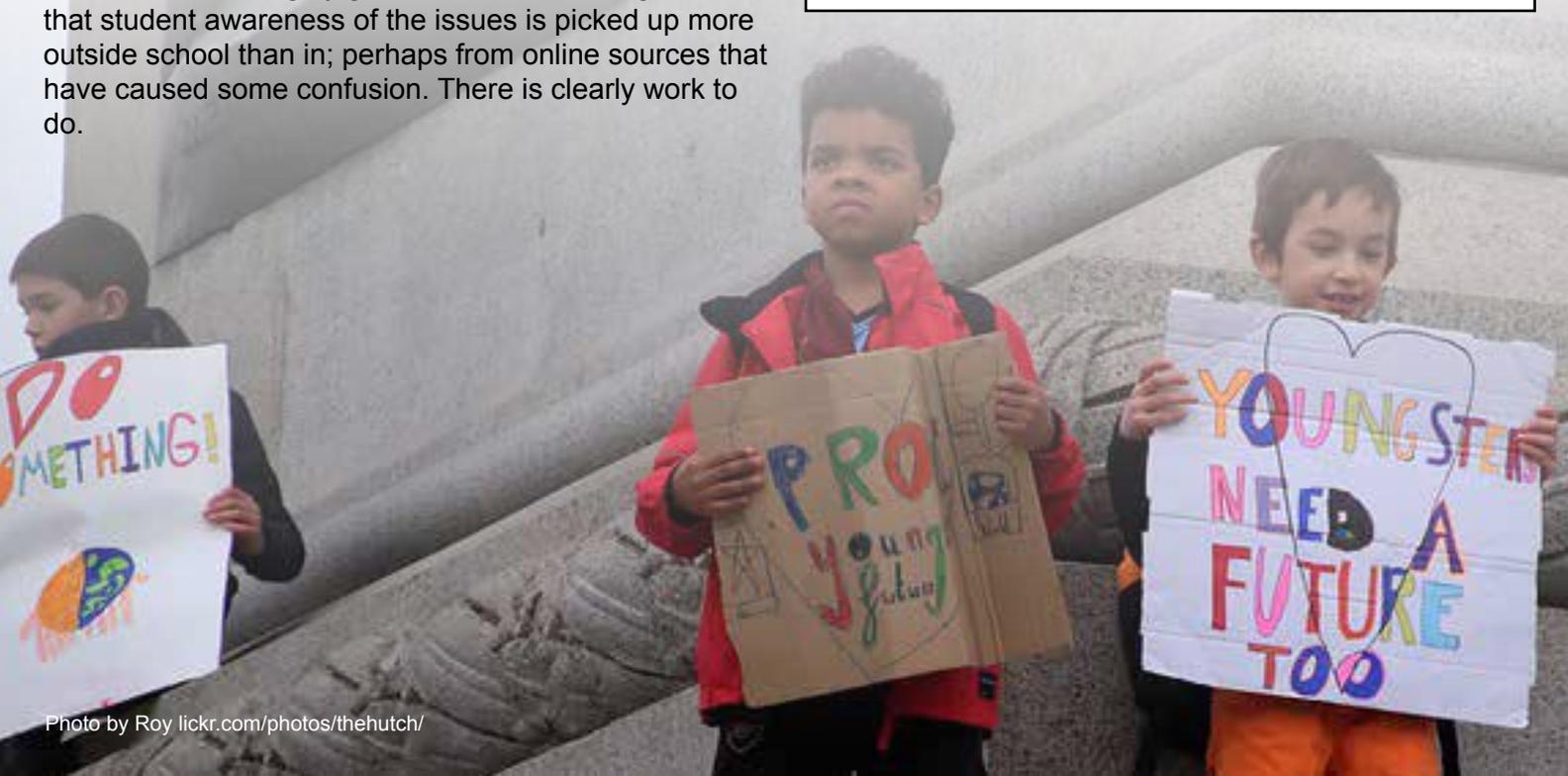
Jenny Cooper NEU Executive and ITUC delegate to COP27

Teach the Future launch Curriculum for a Changing Climate: track changes review of the national curriculum for England.

The first-of-its-kind report reviews the curriculum for key stages 3 and 4 in the English National Curriculum, covering subjects ranging from History to Art and Design. Using a 'tracked changes' methodology the report suggests where and how the national curriculum can be amended to include sustainability and respond to the climate and ecological crisis.

Watch the launch webinar and read the amended national curriculum documents [here](#).

Quinn Runkle



Global Climate Jobs Conference

On a weekend in the middle of last month the Global Climate Jobs Network held an international zoom conference. I was one of the organisers, and in some ways it was an impressive event. Overall, the speakers were varied, and very good. They were almost all activists, more women than men, and from the Philippines, India, Pakistan, South Africa, Turkey, Norway, Britain, Portugal and the United States. You can find videos of all the speakers at the Global Climate Jobs channel on Youtube [here](#).

As I listened to a few of the talks, I understood the ways that the global climate struggle is changing rapidly. Sara Aleazar and Zahid Ali explained the extent of the suffering in Pakistan, where nearly 40 million people are now displaced and homeless, and nothing is being done for them (beginning at 25:50) [here](#). In a later session Ammar Ali Jan spoke with compassion and anger about that tragedy (beginning at 9:20) [here](#).

The South African film maker and climate activist Rehad Desai linked what was happening in Pakistan to what was happening in his own country and more generally in Africa (beginning at 35:10 [here](#)). He argued, convincingly, that we are now crossing a global tipping point physically and politically. The scale of the climate disasters now unfolding across the global South - most of the world - is changing dramatically. This means that organising politically in the South, and organising mass movements there, are now of central importance to the future of humanity.

The talk by Ashim Roy, one of the national leaders of NTUI trade union federation in India, also stays with me. His talk was quieter and more reflective than most of the others (beginning at 16:20 [here](#)). Roy began by talking about the divisions on the left that have long weakened the working class in India. Then he talked about the closures he expects in mines across India over the next few years. These will be happening in communities full of indigenous Adivasi people, with long histories of struggle, deeply dependent on coal mining, and where people are poor and often desperate already. Roy talked about how, if activists seriously prepare the ground, a fight for climate jobs for mine workers could transform the union movement in India.

There are many more videos of fascinating talks. But the weakness of the conference was that it was far too small. We need a far larger and more ambitious network. If you are interested, or your organisation wants to affiliate, you can go to globalclimatejobs.org or write to me at Lindisfarne.Neale@gmail.com

Jonathan Neale



Photo by EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid flickr.com/photos/eu_echo/

Forthcoming Conferences

CACCTU Activists workshops

Sat 8 October

Solidarity in the face of crisis:

a full day event to explore in more depth some key issues facing climate, trade union and social justice activists, including making the case for radical action to solve multiple crises, and overcoming barriers to effective organising.



Register [here](#):

More information [here](#).

Claire James

Labour for a Green New Deal Worker-Climate Conference

October 22-23 in Sheffield, will bring together trade unionists taking action on the climate to share experiences and tactics. As hot strike summer turns to autumn, this is the time to build winning strategies with workers coordinating to take on bosses and the Tories to fight for a worker's transition in workplaces and industries.

At the conference participants will discuss:

- reflections from trade union climate work from 2020-22,
- practical methods being undertaken towards transition in industries,
- organising at a local level,
- using their trade union structures for effective climate work, and more. Extended details can be found [here](#).

If you'd like to join, please fill in the application form [here](#), or email tradeunions@labourgnd.uk to share your worker-climate organising experience to help us build conference resources.

Find our model funding motion [here](#) to help make this essential event possible.

TUC Courses

Introduction to the role of the Green/ Environmental Rep in the South West

3 day virtual course

22, 23 and 29 November 2022

There has never been a better time to get involved in the environmental agenda in the workplace. Recent weather conditions have impacted on workers in many industries and highlighted the need for trade unions to do more in the workplace around this issue.

This 3 day course will help you:

- Understand why the environment is a trade union issue
- Explore the role of the Environmental Rep
- Understand the language around environmental issues
- Discover how work processes impact the environment
- Understand mapping environmental issues
- Greening the supply chain
- How to engage with management and green agreements
- How to get the Branch on board
- How to communicate and promote environmental issues

A 3 day virtual course 22, 23 and 29 November

Apply at,

www.tuc.org.uk/TUCcourses#southwest

Or email Alison for more information

Alison.foster@cityofbristol.ac.uk

TUC Wales is also organising courses on Negotiating for a Just Transition and Greening our workplaces - 'green skills' for trade unionists throughout the year. [Details here](#).



Actions

This Crisis Demands Action - COP27 Global Day of Action 12 November

At the next UN climate change talks (COP27) in Sharm-el- Sheik, Egypt, the COP27 coalition, formed of Egyptian, African and Arab groups, is calling for a Global Day of Action on 12 November.

In the UK the Climate Justice Coalition, the successor to the COP26 coalition, is organising events in Blackpool, Belfast, Derry, Dublin, Edinburgh, London, Plymouth and Newcastle, along with more local events. For the Climate Justice Coalition trade union caucus, a key message is to give solidarity, and make the links between the cost of living, energy and climate crisis.

For more on the planned mobilisations, visit: [COP27 Mobilisations - COP26 Coalition](#) and [COP27 Coalition](#).

Please also join the CJC trade union caucus meetings, the next one planned for 18th October where we will focus on mobilising in trade unions.

Contact sam@pcs.org.uk for details.



Green Bites

Graphic of the Month

England oil and gas map | Friends of the Earth

Over a quarter of local authorities in England are covered by existing licences to explore for oil and gas, which could involve fracking.

This map shows the areas of England covered by onshore oil and gas licences. Companies with such licences have the right to search and bore for petroleum. Many of the licenced areas overlap with potential areas of fracking for shale gas, identified by the British Geological Survey.

Use the zoom in and out function to enter your postcode to see if your neighbourhood is at risk from oil and gas extraction, and find information about your local constituency.



Statistics of the month

**7
times**

How much **global fossil fuel reserves will exceed 1.5C** if burned.

50%

How far **home insulation declined** in the UK 2021

**21
million**

Number of journeys taken by young people in Scotland since **introduction of free bus travel** in January.

**£260
billion**

The cost of **decommissioning the UK's current stockpile of nuclear waste**.

Supporting the Greener Jobs Alliance

The GJA is a loose coalition of organisations involved in climate change work.

We wish to make it clear that the views expressed in our publications and activities do not necessarily reflect the position of all the organisations whom we work with.

We will always seek to make that clear by listing the organisations that have specifically signed up to a particular initiative.