

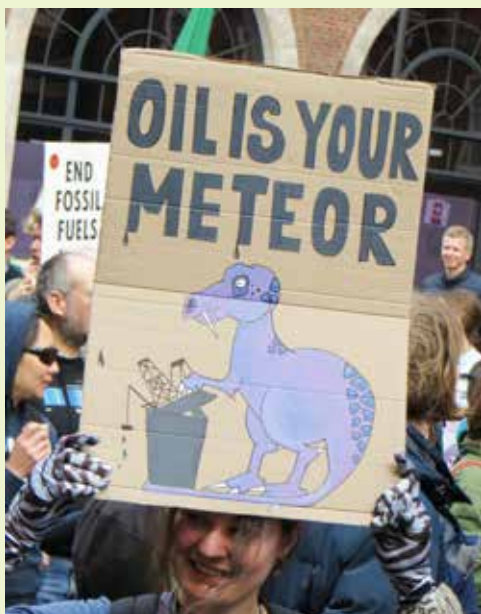


Photo by Mick Holder

Editorial: El Nino is Coming. We need Two, Three, Many Big Ones!

While imaginative non violent direct action gets headlines, mass mobilisations build movements. XR's Big One demonstration, over the weekend of 21 - 24 April, was a huge rolling mix of lobbies, pickets, rallies, discussions, education events (and drumming) bringing together diverse strands of the climate movement in an empowering, fluid and harmonious way right across Westminster and redefining the space in a creative way that must have had the leader writers at the Daily Mail grinding their teeth at how peaceful and positive it all was.

With the world now on [El Nino watch](#), and unprecedented heat waves already hitting South Asia and Spain in April, and consolidating the drought in the Horn of Africa, we can expect even more extreme weather events this summer and for the next three or four years. We should not forget that the highest temperature yet recorded in the UK was last year at the end of the relatively cool La Nina cycle; so we know what to expect.



We will need more and bigger events of this sort in response, with a much more visible mainstream union presence. XRs turn to mobilising the "Climate Majority" is the right approach - as two thirds of the population want more action on climate breakdown - and we need to show this in the streets, at the polls to turf the climate deniers out, and in the resistance to the cost of living crisis brought on by increasingly unaffordable fossil fuels as the strike wave rolls on into the Autumn and Winter. An explicit focus on the links, as [pioneered by the German climate movement and Transport unions in March](#), will set off a dynamic that the government will find hard to cope with. Let's do that!

Paul Atkin (Editor)

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Quote of the Month

A lot of people see climate politics as a marathon. But it's more that we need to sprint because we started too slow."

Julia Epp, Scientist at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

Public Transport fit for the Climate Emergency



High-speed train at Copenhagen Central Station. Photo: Arne List

Public transport has a vital role to play in decarbonising our economy and ensuring a planet fit for our children and grandchildren to live in. But improving our public transport is not only about safeguarding our environment, it's also about the quality of life in communities all over Britain.

The transport workforce has suffered alongside passengers. Years of frozen pay and attacks on terms and conditions are a poor reward for key workers who were on the frontline during the pandemic.

On 12 April we launched our latest report, *Public Transport fit for the Climate Emergency* in a packed room at the Mechanics Institute. The Mechanics is the birthplace of the TUC, so it was a fitting venue; as speakers like Mick Lynch (RMT), Mick Whelan (ASLEF), Peter Pendle (TSSA), Bobby Morton (Unite) and Mayor of Manchester Andy Burnham made clear, public transport is a climate issue, it's a class issue, it's a gender and race equality issue and it's a trade union issue.

We need urgent action to meet our climate commitments and that must include a step change on transport. To achieve a big enough modal shift to meet our Paris climate commitment we need 47bn km in journeys currently taken by car replaced by public transport. As Andy Burnham pointed out on Tuesday, more money for public transport services as well as infrastructure is "exactly what we need".

The report calls for funding to rise by at least

- £7.5bn per year for buses,
- £0.5bn per year for trams
- £10.9bn per year for trains.

Overall we are calling for an additional £28.7bn of investment in transport infrastructure and services. For comparison, the government's latest fuel duty freeze will cost £27bn over the next five years.

Public transport for the climate crisis also makes the positive case for action,

- with a projected boost to growth of £52bn, a net gain of £23bn on the investment, just through increased productivity from bringing people and businesses together into one area.
- Around 140,000 direct jobs in bus, tram and rail operation created by the uplift in public transport services (a new job for every two existing jobs).
- Around 620,000 jobs created through the proposed bus manufacture and construction of bus priority infrastructure up to 2035.
- Around 110,000 jobs associated with tram construction up to 2035.
- And up to 1.8 million jobs supported indirectly in association with the additional rail investment up to 2035, although not all of these would be 'new' jobs.

And that doesn't even cover the benefits that would arise from cleaner air and a healthier population as a result of less congested roads. Not to mention the less quantifiable benefits: more connected, less isolated communities. Families able to visit more often, grandparents more able to babysit, kids and adults with better access to education, training and jobs. Women working late at night can get home safely. These things are vital components of a decent, dignified life.

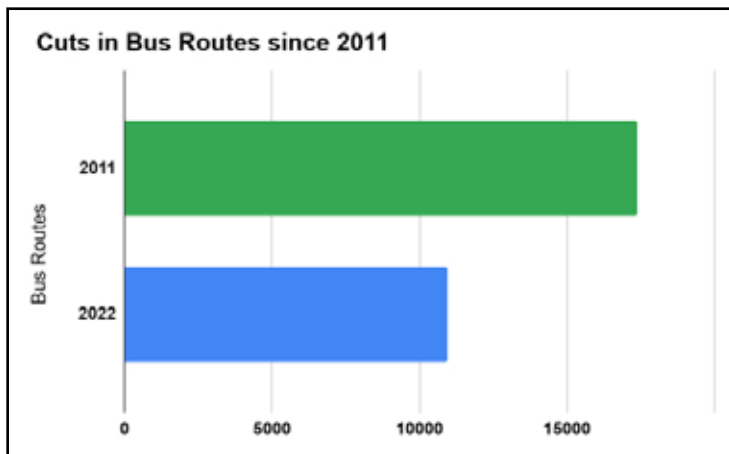
As Mick Lynch pointed out *"A public transport system for people, for our climate and for our economy, run in the interests of people rather than profit"* is a class issue and it's a race issue.

Working class people and BAME communities are more likely to rely on public transport and more likely to suffer when it's cut. Therefore *"A better affordable sustainable public transport can be a liberation for working class people and contribute to solving the environmental crisis"*.

The climate emergency means we must act. But the benefits of affordable, reliable and extensive public transport are so great that we should want to anyway – for the lower cost of living and higher quality of life it will bring. This report lays out the blueprint for 21st century public transport, all that's left is to build it.

Kamaljeet Gill Policy Officer, Organisation Services and Skills Department Trades Union Congress (TUC)

The TUC is keen to meet with community and campaign groups to discuss using this report in local campaigning. Please contact Kamaljeet at the TUC to discuss it.
kgill@tuc.org.uk



When bus routes are cut, people are forced into cars. Another reason emissions have not declined in the last decade.

Green Alliance makes the same point

The TUC Report dovetails with the **Not Going the Extra Mile** Report from the Green Alliance that calls for *"greater national investment in public transport over the next decade, as well as more support for local authorities to improve facilities for active travel and to make neighbourhoods more walkable"* and notes that *"shifting just 1.7 per cent of car journeys to active travel would provide the UK with up to £2.5 billion per year in health benefits. And reducing congestion would provide an economic boost, as the cost of congestion was estimated to be almost £8 billion in 2018."* Ed.

The New York Times **reported recently** that a Volkswagen-founded industry body had commissioned researchers to make lab monkeys inhale diesel fumes, with the objective of proving them harmless. Like the emissions tests in the Dieselgate scandal, the vehicle used (a diesel VW Beetle) had been doctored to emit fewer toxic particles in the lab than would occur in real conditions.



Bus Futures: Electric bus in Shanghai

Dramatic growth in EV sales

The International Energy Agency reports in the latest edition of its **Global Electric Vehicle Outlook** that

- more than 10 million electric cars were sold worldwide in 2022
- sales are expected to grow by another 35% this year to reach 14 million.
- So, EV market share has risen from around 4% in 2020 to 14% in 2022 and is set to increase further to 18% this year on latest projections.

Fig 1 shows which companies have the largest share of this market and where they are based.

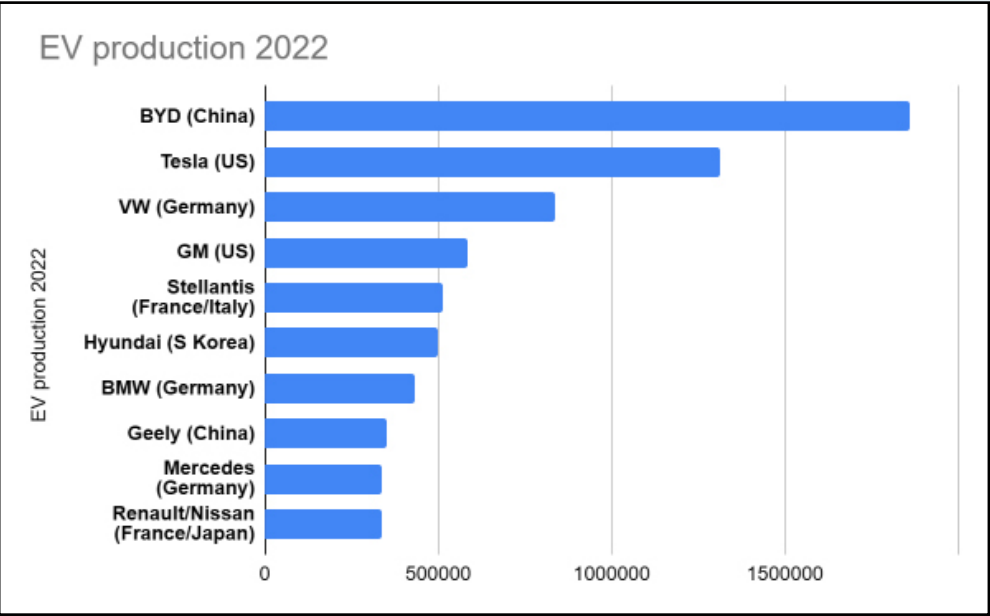
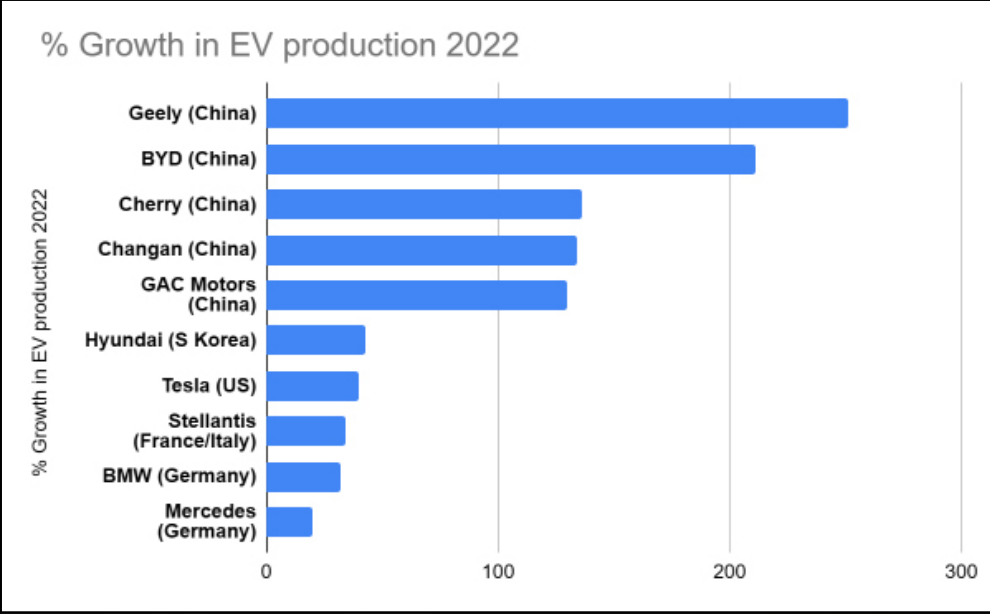


Fig 2 shows the fastest expanding companies in this sector and where they are based.



Original figures from [Visual Capitalist](#).

Hydrogen Powered Vehicles?

Unite is in discussions with companies about hydrogen fuel. To reach comparable growth for Hydrogen Fuel Vehicles as Electric Battery Vehicles several barriers would have to be overcome.

This includes

- lowering the current high retail price of these cars. For example, the Toyota Mirai, a mid-size passenger car that is one of the two fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) currently available in the UK, is priced around £60,000
- addressing the lack of refuelling infrastructure
- the need to increase system efficiencies to compete with other power trains.

For fuel cells, a crucial factor will be the price of hydrogen at the pump once infrastructure is in place. Analysis by the Hydrogen Council shows the price of hydrogen for passenger vehicles becomes viable at \$2/kg and \$4-5/kg for commercial vehicles (including vans.)

In the North East, Unite shop stewards and officers worked with Cummins to win significant government backing for hydrogen production of commercial engines at the Darlington manufacturing plant.

Unite has entered into talks with other engine makers and the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC) to look at the feasibility of hydrogen fuel cells for commercial vans.

For large UK factories, this would require engine production to be defended. Any gradual fall in engine production should be replaced by developing fuel cell manufacturing and EV battery recycling facilities (see last Newsletter). This would offer large factories, which



Photo Ruth Sharville/Wikimedia

Hydrogen powered bus in London:

may be currently at risk, a potential future by emulating the example of the Renault Flins factory outside Paris.

The automotive industry is witnessing the most significant technological revolution since the era of the horse. Technological shifts are never neutral; their impact is shaped by the interests they serve. So Unite ties the transition to electrification directly to advancing the collective bargaining agenda. Unite's collective defence and advance of union-organised jobs, with associated pay and conditions, is designed to ensure that the automotive sector remains the premier manufacturing sector in the UK for many years to come.

Edited by Carl Jerromes from an original article by Des Quinn, Steve Bush (Unite National Officers for the Automotive sector) and Ben Norman (Unite Researcher for the Automotive sector) in UNITE Environment Quarterly 6 (organised by Jim Mowatt)

May is National Walking Month

- A Poll for Living Streets showed that “going for a walk” is the most popular Bank Holiday activity in the UK
- Visit Living Streets’ [National Walking Month webpage](#), including a link to the full news story on the poll.
- [Twenty tips to add 20 minutes walking](#) to daily routines
- Walk To School Week 15-19 May

Photo: Krzysztof Hepner on Unsplash

Better Transport Week 12 - 18 June

[Details here](#)



Photo: Άγγελος Αγορτσός on Unsplash

Planning system changes needed to promote home energy efficiency

To meet the UK Government's targets to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases from our homes and to address the cost of living crisis there needs to be a major programme to upgrade the energy efficiency of our homes. This involves improvements both to the fabric of homes and to the systems for controlling their internal temperature and moisture levels.

Lack of funding and shortage of skills are major obstacles to the implementation of retrofit projects on the scale needed. Through my involvement in the Architects Climate Action Network, I became aware that obtaining planning permission was another issue holding back retrofit projects, so I decided to investigate the extent to which this was a problem.

My research involved interviews with a range of built environment professionals responsible for domestic retrofit projects for private and public sector clients in a wide range of locations in England.

I found that the planning system hinders the implementation of domestic retrofit projects in a number of ways. These include

- lack of clarity and inconsistency in the implementation of policy,
- conservation policy being given greater weight than energy efficiency,
- planning officers' lack of knowledge about retrofit,
- application forms being unsuited to retrofit projects,
- delays resulting from an under resourced planning system,
- and problems relating to the retrofit of specific building elements.

[My report is available to be downloaded here.](#)

Based on this research recommendations to the planning system include:

- at a national level,
- revising the regulations for permitted development to promote a fabric first approach
- amending the National Planning Policy Framework
- to balance the weight given to energy efficiency improvements with that given to protecting heritage in making decisions about planning applications;
- to require local planning authorities to produce guidance on domestic retrofit based on new national model retrofit guidance;

and at a local level,

- permitting development which complies with local guidance;
- amending plans to require energy impact statements;
- providing training for planners on retrofit;
- establishing local authority task forces to ensure effective local authority cross departmental working and community engagement.

As changes to the planning system are only one aspect of policy needed to improve the energy efficiency of our homes on the scale required, we need a national campaign to promote retrofit, which brings together the many different organisations working on the issue. This could include groups ranging from the Association for Environmental Conscious Building, the Construction Industry Council, Friends of the Earth, Fuel Poverty Action and the New Economics Foundation.

Dr Suzy Nelson, University of Westminster



Get a Heatwave plan for your Workplace - TUC



With the El Nino already kicking in, the weather's turning warmer – have you got a heatwave plan at work?

This new **TUC video** and leaflet shows how union reps and activists can plan for heatwaves and cold snaps, and take climate action at work.

You can protect workers from extreme heat, save energy and mobilise union members by taking climate action. **Read the TUC guide to building retrofit here.**

If you've tried this and want to share your experience, or would like some more support with future-proofing the building you work in, email climate@tuc.org.uk.

Share the resources with colleagues.

- Heatwaves and high energy bills are coming – **here's how we as trade unionists can prepare at work**
- Have you taken part in climate mobilisations on the streets? **Here's how to take climate action at work**, too.

Hot Schools?

The Joint Education Unions heatwave protocol gives helpful tips on planning to help ensure schools don't struggle in the way they did last year.

Check it out here, under "Extreme weather".

Air Quality Strategy consultation a sham

The Trade Union Clean Air Network (TUCAN) is a member of the Healthy Air Coalition which had a parliamentary launch in April. This was the same time as the Government announced a 'consultation' exercise on the Draft Air Quality Strategy. This was introduced at the last minute with a 10 day response time in order to meet a May 1st deadline. The revised document can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/air-quality-strategy-framework-for-local-authority-delivery) Air quality strategy: framework for local authority delivery - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Clean Air London wrote to Therese Coffey at Defra challenging the flawed consultation. They included a set of recommendations that included *"Public authorities need to be given more powers to achieve "outputs" and not additional obligations on "inputs" so that they can get on with the vital task of protecting public health, the environment and the climate and complying fully with vital outcomes including the WHO's new guidelines."*

The strategy places responsibilities on local authorities at a time when they face huge budget cuts. TUCAN has been calling for much clearer duties on employers. These are absent from the strategy.

The Government claims that indoor air pollution has been included for the first time. While this is welcome, indoor pollution is largely framed as pollution in the home. It fails to address TUCAN concerns about indoor pollution at work caused by employers' failure to control workplace emissions.

Delays mean more deaths - Another major cause of concern is the decision to adopt target dates that delay alignment with the latest WHO standards.

- The PM2.5 interim annual mean target 4 of 10mg/m³ does not need to be delivered until 2040.
- For Nitrogen Dioxide, a report for London, showed that every borough breached World Health Organisation (WHO) limits.
- 2 of the boroughs opposing the ULEZ – Bexley and Harrow – didn't even carry out diffusion tube tests and the Evening Standard reports that air in every London borough breaches WHO guidelines on toxic nitrogen dioxide.

TUCAN will continue to challenge the Government's lack of ambition and the gaps in current policy. We will be using the period between now and Clean Air Day on June 15th to expose cases of occupational indoor pollution. Please keep us informed of any air pollution initiatives in your union or workplace by emailing [gjacomsg@gmail.com](mailto:gjacoms@gmail.com).

Check the air quality in your home & workplace



Photo: Graham Petersen

Dr Camilla Kingdon, President of the Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health speaking at the HAC Parliamentary launch on April 18th. She highlighted new research carried out with Imperial College that showed the connection between smaller foetus brain size and air pollution exposure.

Mums for Lungs Children's Clean Air Petition

Please sign the Children's Clean Air Petition (with Clean Air Bayswater) asking Party Leaders to clean up our air. Sign on behalf of yourselves and your children and please share with family, friends and colleagues.

[Sign here.](#)

Mums for Lungs have set up the ScienceFest with some of the most prestigious scientific organisations in the UK and an army of junior citizen scientists learning about, measuring and assessing the air around us. [Full details, including BBC & ITV News reports here.](#)

Email: schools@mumsforlungs.org to get involved.



Climate in every Course. Lessons from Manchester Met

As a top three ranked institution in the [People and Planet University League](#) for the last decade, sustainability has been a priority for Manchester Metropolitan University for some time. We have delivered Carbon Literacy training to our students on a voluntary basis since 2012 and have been Responsible Futures accredited since 2015.

But now we are going further to demonstrate our commitment to embedding sustainability in our formal and informal curriculum. We are passionate about providing all Manchester Met students with the skills, knowledge, and mindsets to tackle sustainability challenges through whichever career or life path they take.

To achieve this, our new Leadership in Sustainability Strategy commits to embed climate change education (i.e., Carbon Literacy) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in all our programmes by 2026.

What we've done so far

In 2020, we embarked upon developing a new sustainability strategy.

- We had recently delivered Carbon Literacy for Leaders training to about 100 senior colleagues from across the University.
- We delivered interactive workshops open to all staff and students, and a short survey for internal and external stakeholders collected feedback about what the University's key sustainability priorities should be.
- We also developed projects to engage students in the development of our new sustainability strategy and ran a student-led campaign on Instagram and Facebook.

Our new strategy was successfully launched in 2022.

Having a co-created, endorsed Leadership in Sustainability Strategy is one thing. Implementing it is quite another.

So, we have enhanced our quality assurance processes to evaluate ESD and Carbon Literacy delivery in programmes across the institution, and sustainability is now included as a key theme in our university Graduate Attributes.

- Developing the capacity of staff to understand how to address ESD and Carbon Literacy in taught courses is essential.
- We have taken a phased approach, and to date, our focus has been on Carbon Literacy.
- To enable this, we have recruited Carbon Literacy Champions from every academic department. The role of the Champion is to support this vital work by embedding Carbon Literacy into their courses and promoting the initiative across their department.

Our Carbon Literacy team, led by Dr Rachel Dunk,

- has delivered pioneering, award-winning Carbon Literacy and Carbon Literacy train-the-trainer training to staff, students, and external organisations for several years.
- They have also developed a Carbon Literacy Project Toolkit, [freely available to universities and colleges here](#).
- Based on their expertise, the Carbon Literacy team have recently developed Teach Carbon Literacy training, which is delivered to Champions to equip them to deliver Carbon Literacy training as appropriate to their discipline.
- As delivery is rolled out, students trained in Carbon Literacy through their course will then be encouraged to undertake Carbon Literacy train-the-trainer training themselves.
- Our next phase is to develop and mainstream support to effectively embed ESD relevant to all disciplines.

At Manchester Met, we are fortunate that sustainability is viewed as a priority and a shared responsibility, and it is thanks to colleagues, students, and partners who are such effective agents of change for sustainability that we have been able to take these steps. Yet we know there is much more to do, and we will need to continue to work together if we are to achieve our commitments. For more info please contact e.price@mmu.ac.uk

Professor Liz Price, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor Sustainability, Manchester Metropolitan University

We Make Tomorrow conference 20 May, Manchester



The We Make Tomorrow conference is bringing together union officials and reps, climate justice activists and international guests for a day-long meeting to strategise and build our collective power on addressing climate change and the multiple crises facing workers.

Through a mixture of plenary sessions and workshops, this participatory event will dig into what climate change really means for workers. It will link how rising energy prices, inflation, falling wages, and the climate crisis are all sides of the same coin, driven by the same systems.

[More details and registration here](#)

Speakers' Corner: Climate, community and coal Thursday 18 May, 12 noon

This is a chance to hear how plans for the proposed Whitehaven coal mine stack up with local and national goals to tackle the Climate Crisis, and the alternatives that exist.

We'll also explore the power of community campaigning to beat fossil fuel companies - and to secure a better future for communities like those in West Cumbria, who have been let down by the government.

Speakers will include:

- **Mike Berners-Lee**: author of 'There is No Planet B', Professor in the Institute for Social Futures at Lancaster University, and an expert on Sustainability and Carbon-Footprints
- **Tina Rothery**: climate justice activist and anti-fracking campaigner.
- **Jill Perry**: Cumberland Council Green Party councillor.
- **Anne Harris**: Coal Action Network.
- **Jamie Peters**: Friends of the Earth

The talks will be followed by Q & A/ conversation; distribution of 'Coal Is Not The Goal!' t shirts; and - weather permitting - a chance to walk the perimeter of the site and experience the beauty of the coastal path.

Meeting Point : Outside the Marchon site, Whitehaven: Wilson Pit Road, near the junction with High Road.
SatNav: CA28 9QT 54°31'25.6"N 3°35'35.6"W.
[Google map pindrop here](#)

Please visit the [Facebook page](#) and indicate 'Going' if you plan to come along, so we have an idea of numbers.

This event is co-ordinated by North Lakes XR and Greenpeace activist Allan Todd - with support from West Cumbria and North Lakes Friends of the Earth, and Friends of the Earth.



Green Bites

STATS of the Month

37.9%

Proportion of **UK rail routes** that had been electrified by 2021. At the current conversion rate of around 210 kilometres a year, the remaining 9,890 kilometres will take until 2070 to be finished. Getting the job done by 2040 would require electrifying 581 kilometres a year between now and then.

58%

Proportion of prospective Conservative voters who want to see more renewable energy deployed to bring down bills. From **Possible**

60%

Proportion of people in a YouGov poll in early April believe that water company bosses should face prison over serious incidents of pollution. From **Good Law Project**

Coming next month

Reports on UCU and PCS conferences, the We Make Tomorrow Conference and Alliance for Finance meeting.

Book Review on Challenging the rise of corporate power in renewable energy.

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.

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