



Image by Bruno from Pixabay

Editorial: All maxed out

What better time than the hottest month in recorded history to back off from Net Zero commitments?

In response to being asked about the climate crisis last year, Rishi Sunak said that his young daughters were always asking, “*what are you doing about the environment Daddy?*”

An honest answer might be, “*nothing that affects the profitability of the oil companies darling*”..

From declaring himself “*the motorists friend*”

- opposing 20 mph speed limits and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
- a stance on ULEZ that translates as “let them breathe nox”
- rushing through 100 new permits for oil and gas fields in the North Sea
- cutting the UK carbon price under the EU level,

everything he has done in the last month reflects not so much the obliviousness identified by Zak Goldsmith, “*he is just not interested*”, but complicity and culpability at every level; boosting the fossil fuels that will make us fossils. He described this as “*pragmatism*”; even as holidaymakers in Rhodes were fleeing wildfires.

The **deals that his family business (infosys) has done with BP**, reveals a direct personal benefit. But, even without this kickback from doing the wrong thing, the collective interest of his class puts us on the road to extinction if we leave them in power, as spelt out by **George Monbiot** here.

The government being “*on the wrong side of History*”, as Conservative MP Chris Skidmore put it, poses a challenge to the opposition to stand up to them and not be dragged in their wake, and for the climate movement to mobilise the popular majorities that exist both for climate action nationally; and for cleaner, greener streets and community owned onshore wind in many local areas.

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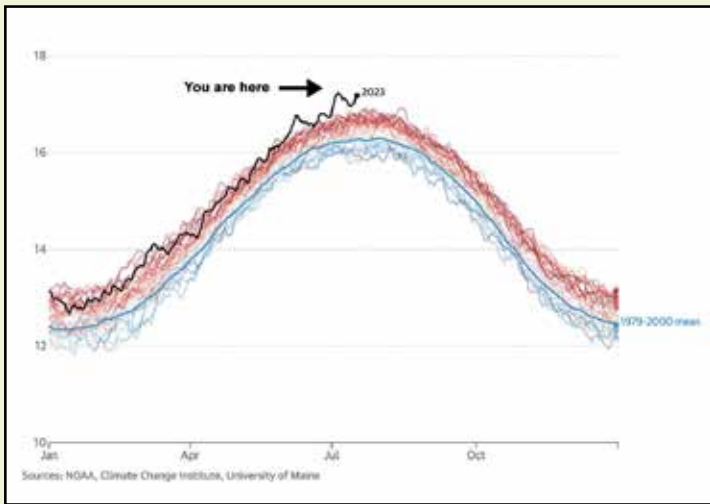
Quote of the Month

I am a major investor here. If I see this country steering itself over a cliff backing fossil fuel, I am going to start pulling out...I must invest where I know I have proper leadership, not leadership that is on a clickbait cycle.

*Australian Mining Magnate
Andrew Forrest*

PCS Efra Group slams PM

If the Prime Minister was a civil servant he would stand in gross breach of (the Civil Service) Code as his announcement is not rooted in evidence and is in fact misleading. It is not possible to 'max' out gas and oil exploration in the North Sea and claim you are heading for net zero. Efra is the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Dept. [Full statement here.](#)



Only 8% of even Conservative voters think that no action should be taken to get to Net Zero. But **55% of all voters** think that the measures needed should not put “additional costs on ordinary people”.

As the transition is imperative for all of us and current economic inequalities neither desirable nor sacrosanct, and generally resented, Labour would have majority support to tax the wealthy and impose windfall fossil fuel profit taxes at confiscatory levels to finance the transition at the expense of those whose elephantine carbon footprints are causing the crisis in the first place.

The **approach being adopted in Wales**, with a publicly owned energy company promoting community renewable energy is a good start. As Welsh Climate Change Minister Julie James puts it, the “*current market-based approach to the energy system is not delivering decarbonisation at the scale of pace necessary for the climate emergency*”.

“To reach this we need a rapid transformation of our energy system. With the launch of Ynni Cymru we are on our pathway to meet the equivalent of 100% of our annual electricity consumption from renewable electricity by 2035, and to continue to keep pace with consumption thereafter.”

“Local use of locally generated energy is an effective way to support net-zero and keep the benefit in our communities.”

Paul Atkin Ed



TUC Fringe Meeting: The case for a National Climate Service: reorganising the state for the climate emergency, people and public ownership

Chair: Tahir Latif Greener Jobs Alliance

Speakers: John Maloney PCS, Stephen Smellie UNISON Suzanne Jeffery CACCTU

The impacts of climate breakdown are intensifying: more than ever, a rapid transition away from fossil fuels is needed. But this government's failure to address the crisis have left ordinary people facing soaring energy bills, and crucial infrastructure like public transport failing, while energy giants pocket obscene profits.

A transformation is needed. A National Climate and Biodiversity Service could deliver on decarbonisation and biodiversity targets at the pace and scale demanded by science. By providing coherence and coordination across government, including devolved, regional and local government, an NCS will organise, plan, train and deliver the huge number of jobs required for a rapid and far reaching transition that puts economic and social justice for workers and communities at its heart.

Sunday 10 September. 6:30 - 7:45

Rail jobs are green jobs – we need public transport fit for the climate emergency

TSSA's Future of Rail campaign makes the case for well-funded public transport run by skilled workers for the benefit of the environment, the economy and people.

We currently face two crises running in parallel – the climate is heating up ever faster, leading to increased extreme weather disasters - and an ever-deepening cost of living crisis. Costs are up, but wages are stagnant.

In a climate crisis it's even more important to focus on cleaner, greener travel, electrify track, upgrade our infrastructure, and move away from aviation.

Despite record breaking heatwaves and floods, Glasgow hosting the COP19 in 2021, and promises to cut fossil fuel consumption, the UK government used the pandemic as cover to run down the railways.

They started calls for job cuts on rail almost as soon as the pandemic started; even though the commuter railway ran all through it, getting key workers into work everyday.

Even before the pandemic, the Department for Transport were renegeing on agreements to electrify parts of the railway to cut reliance on diesel; cancelling electrification plans for Hull in 2016 and again in 2021.

Closing ticket offices will make train travel harder for disabled passengers and anyone trying to get the cheapest ticket.

The government is seeking £1.5 billion worth of cuts from railways in the next 5 years.

In 2015 they took £700 million out of Transport for London's public subsidy.

They are now trying to eat into the infrastructure budget, jobs and pensions too.

But Oxford Economics found that every £1 spent in rail generated £2.50 in the wider economy.

If rail investment increased by 50%, this would generate an additional £5.6bn per year, and an extra 104,000 jobs.

The UK has the highest fares in Europe, which makes it hard for people to take the train.

Public ownership would save around £1 billion a year. That could reduce fares by 18%.

Transport is the biggest polluting sector in Britain and nothing has been done to reverse this. The Tory government is making it worse by investing in new roads.

In 2020 the government offered generous bailouts to aviation. Airlines took £1.8bn from the Covid relief scheme. Yet when Eurostar asked for guaranteed loans that would protect the routes to France, Belgium and beyond as well as over 1,000 jobs they got nothing.

Clearly public transport is the answer, investing in new track and new trains, and ensuring that the investment is effective – by taking rail into public ownership.

We need to make it easier for people to get to work or travel around the country on public transport by reducing fares. This would reduce fossil fuel usage, pollution, costs of fuel and also help increase leisure travel to benefit local economies.

It doesn't have to be like this.

Last Summer Germany set up a €9 a month ticket for unlimited public transport, which was a huge success. Over 31 million tickets were sold, passenger numbers regained pre-pandemic levels, decreasing road use. Germany funded the move by paying private train operators – something the British Department of Transport is currently funding without the same level of benefit for passengers! This year they have followed it up with a **€49 a month flat fee** for all public transport apart from long distance ICE (intercity) trains.

But in the UK we had the biggest increase to rail fares in nine years (3.8%) last year and this is set to rise even further. This is unsustainable with rising house prices forcing key workers further and further out of major cities; requiring them to commute to keep vital public services going.

Making travel affordable is proven to take people out of their cars and onto greener, more efficient public transport. What are we waiting for?

The rail strikes have shown workers standing up for themselves and making an eloquent case for good pay deals and strong unions as the face of public transport. It's workers that will keep us moving, public sector members who make planning and procurement decisions; and we have a lot to offer in terms of organisation and tactics.

The trade union base is changing - more women are taking up their space in the union movement and our members want a world that their children can grow up in.

Kerry Abel TSSA

Future of Rail is a project of the TSSA which makes the case for well funded public transport run by highly skilled workers for the benefit of the economy and the people.

Plane Speaking: moving journeys from air to rail



This report from the Campaign for Better transport, **Plane Speaking: moving journeys from air to rail**, sets out how we can begin to reduce the number of flights and target a sector that has seen a staggering increase in emissions of 124 per cent from 1990 to 2019.

It found that by reducing the most popular domestic flights by half, we could save 409,598 tonnes of carbon: the equivalent of taking 283,000 cars off the road. Whilst this may sound like a tall order, our report revealed that the majority of the most popular domestic and near-Europe flights can be completed more quickly and cheaply by train, making a switch to rail immediately possible for thousands of journeys.

[Full Report here](#)

[There's a train to get you there film here.](#) Useful stats and images. And voiced by Jenny Agutter for that Radio 4 appeal...

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.



Birthday Buses

From 1 August residents in the West of England can ride the buses right across the region completely free of charge throughout the whole month of their birthday after an initiative by West of England Mayor Dan Norris. [Full story here.](#)

Better buses week Good for People, Good for the Planet

Better Buses national week of action, 1 to 8 October, calling for an end to cuts and fair funding for bus services.

Events/campaign stalls/meetings and rallies will be taking place across England and Scotland.

Contact the campaign for information, a draft leaflet for the week of action and a full report of the conference or join our google group by emailing betterbusesnational@gmail.com



Photo by flickr.com/photos/shefftim/

Union Conference Round Up

UNITE

Motions calling for “No new fossil fuels” were merged into a single composite but, after debate, were superseded by an overriding statement from the Unite Executive Council primarily focussed on the need for public ownership of energy, but dropping the commitment to no more fossil fuels. When that statement passed, the “No new fossil fuels” motion automatically fell and this allows for Unite support for further UK oil and gas exploration.

Climate Justice Caucus activists pushed the debate and, though the motion failed, delegates and reps were beginning to talk about the need for a worker-led vision of decarbonisation. Several talked passionately about the need for workers’ rights to be a crucial part of a just transition. One who works in oil and gas spoke about how the changing of her industry must come from experts within, not by being “preached” to from the outside.

The next day the conference heard a motion advocating for Unite to investigate using Workers’ Assemblies, and how they might inform existing democratic union frameworks in aiding a just transition.

This was proposed, debated, then “remitted” with the agreement of the movers. That means it was withdrawn, but with agreement to follow up with the Executive Council to explore the idea and continue the dialogue and progress.

Two fringe events were held, by the Grassroots Climate Justice Caucus - on “No new fossil fuels”, and by Safe Landing, on Workers’ Assemblies. Both provided opportunities for delegates and visitors at the conference to discuss the climate crisis and a worker-led transition. Both were productive and enjoyable.

A recording of the Fringe Event on “Workers’ Assemblies” (including Sarah Castell, the Director of Involve (on how Citizens’ Assemblies work) [can be watched here](#).

All this sparked debate, forged networks and pushed the door further open for more detailed discussions on Workers’ Assemblies and what a worker-led just transition looks like

The conference reminded us of the collective potential of an organised working class if we leverage our power through the means of industrial disputes, collective bargaining, and the ability to “down tools” and shut down any industry when we reject the direction that leaders are taking us in.

As the climate crisis is not going away, the pressure on high-carbon sectors will intensify as time goes on. As union members and climate campaigners, we will keep the pressure on so our union can adapt and respond to it.

This is a heavily edited version of a full report from Safe Landing, an aviation workers grouping who are organising to strengthen connections and initiatives among workers in high-carbon sectors, sharing ideas and model motions with workers in a range of sectors, countries and unions. For further info from them, [sign up for their Newsletter here](#).

UNITE is currently working on a Just Transition Plan for North Sea Oil and Gas workers with an aim, as we understand it, to publish it by Conference season in the Autumn. Ed

Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union

BFAWU already has policy opposing fracking, promoting green reps, greening the union and passed the following motion this year.

‘That this Conference agrees that we lobby the government that all new estates that are built, are built with their own green renewable energy supply from either wind power, Solar Power, Hydroelectric or Geothermal. All which would be connected to a universal battery to store power for the dark and cold evenings, for that estate. Thus keeping the carbon footprint at a minimum’

This has been sent to the union’s Parliamentary group and resources and information put together for members around how this can be achieved.

Office for Students Chair is Oil Lobbyist

The Office for Students is the higher education regulator in England, and supposed to protect the interests of students. Conservative peer Lord Wharton advises a supplier of fossil fuel services, and until recently worked for a lobbying firm with ties to the Koch oil and gas empire. Calls for him to “cut ties” with these fall far short. We should demand he be sacked. Ed

From desmog



Campaigning for better climate education

We are growing up in a world shaped by the climate emergency and ecological crisis. Yet, education in the UK isn't preparing students to face the effects of climate change or helping us to understand the causes and solutions. **Teach the Future** is an inclusive, well organised and persistent campaign led by school students to change this. As education in the UK is a devolved matter, we also have specific campaign branches with their own set of Asks in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England.

Unfortunately, the climate crisis is only taught briefly in a couple of optional subjects and we've found that often where it is taught, it's not done to high enough quality. We want mandatory, integrated and assessed climate education.

Our own research has found that only 4% of students feel they know a lot about the climate crisis, and 75% of teachers feel that they haven't received adequate training to educate students about the climate crisis, yet 89% reported that issues regarding climate change were relevant to their subject area.

What we have achieved and our upcoming plans We have made great strides towards improving this, having introduced our **Climate Education Bill** (the first ever student-written parliamentary bills) into Parliament and having been key influencers in the publication of the Department for Education's first ever **Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy**. We are further pushing for this change through actions like our **Tracked Changes Project**, which demonstrates how climate education can be implemented within the existing guidelines of the English national curriculum. You can hear more

about this project on an episode of the **Reasons to be cheerful podcast**.

"Without sufficient climate education, the onus is on young people to educate themselves, which, at worst, results in misinformation and eco-anxiety. If the findings of [our tracked changes] project are implemented, young people would be able to discuss and learn about our environment and sustainability in a safe, controlled environment, leaving them prepared for our ever-changing world... climate education needs to go beyond carbon emissions and recycling to empower students to participate and engage with the climate crisis."

Maya, TTF volunteer, England

Over the last few months, across all our campaign branches, we have been engaging politicians to gain their support for our campaign Asks. In Scotland and Wales, we held parliamentary receptions, and in England we have been busy meeting with a range of politicians, including Bridget Phillipson and Ed Miliband.

In the run-up to the general election, we will be continuing with this engagement to push parliamentary candidates to commit to improving climate education across the curriculum.

We have had a really positive response to our Tracked Changes project with teachers sharing with us how they are using the guidance for KS3 and KS4 in their teaching and students actively taking it to their teachers to help bring improved climate education into their school. We are now continuing the project for primary subjects to help bring climate education to even more students.

Help fund us! We can't achieve all this vital work without your help. Please consider **donating to the campaign**, to fund our Tracked Changes project, as well as allowing us to meet with politicians and run actions throughout the UK.

Get in touch:
hello@teachthefuture.uk
Follow us on Instagram:
[_teachthefuture](https://www.instagram.com/_teachthefuture)

UCL Steps up

Alongside the initiatives being taken by **Teach the Future**, UCL has carried out a survey which shows *“significant gaps in professional development related to climate change and sustainability education. Access to high quality professional development for teachers of all subjects and at all levels should be a priority for enhancing climate change and sustainability education in schools”* but *“the potential to establish and/or extend practice in all subjects in order to enhance school-based climate change and sustainability education across the curriculum.”* [Full Report here.](#)

They have also produced free Professional Development Resources to try to fill this gap, which can be [accessed here](#), along with a succinct and useful 35 minute introductory film. It is to state the obvious that this work should be being led and driven by the DFE. That is ruled out by the current government. It should be owned by the next one. Ed



Step into Your Future Week

The **Step Into Your Future** project week is a highlight of the Year 12 calendar at Greenhead College, and this year sustainability was firmly on the agenda.

Green skills and careers are an important part of the college’s sustainability strategy. As Careers Leader, Zoe Smith, explained *‘highlighting future careers paths with an emphasis on sustainability is vital to what we do, who we work with and how we hope to shape and influence our young people.’*

Carbon Literacy training was launched successfully. Visits to three local sustainability champions contextualised learning: CITU, a low carbon property developer, Kirkstall Valley Farm and Camira fabrics. At each, students heard about the organisation’s ethos, successes, and some everyday obstacles to improving sustainability.

Continued ...



Students at Camira Fabrics. Photo Will Carver

The Geography, Geology and Environment project aimed to give a taste of as many careers as possible.

- At Marsden Moor, National Trust employees explained the importance of peat as a carbon store and the trust's role in preserving and restoring the moor.
- The Canal and Rivers Trust provided an opportunity for some practical conservation work.
- The Environment Agency, ARUP and BAM, delivered a workshop on natural flood management strategies and students visited the Brighthouse Flood Alleviation Scheme to see how biodiversity is promoted and opportunities for recreation are enhanced.
- The role of Geology in the Green Revolution and of satellites in environmental research was explored at Leeds University and the project finished with talks from Kirklees Council on planning and urban regeneration and from former students on their routes into green careers.
- Oxfam provided used garments and materials for the festival themed Upcycle project. Students were introduced to Oxfam's role and to ideas about the Circular Economy by staff from Upcycle Fashion. They went on to create mood boards, collate inspirational images, work with, and adapt the materials provided and engage with graphic design in developing their festival 'look'. The project culminated with a fashion shoot with a professional photographer, linked to the Kirklees Woven festival.

Step Into week ended with an in-house careers fayre at which exhibitors were invited to showcase their organisations' efforts to become more sustainable. Greenhead College students were ready with questions.

Stuart Strathdee; Greenhead College



Photo: Students at Kirkstall Valley Farm; Photo Stuart Strathdee

The National Audit Office has reported that the Department for Education **“does not know what contribution” its climate change schemes will have** – even though education settings produce 37 per cent of public sector emissions” and that **“There is a mismatch between the funding allocated for this work and the ambitions of the strategy”**. Even the programme designed to identify low-cost ways to increase the resilience to climate change of the existing estate has been cut from £90.5 million to £4.6 million. Make do and mend can only take you so far before the fabric falls apart and this decision is, as NEU Joint General Secretary Kevin Courtney says **“incredibly short sighted”**. Ed

Forthcoming Climate Campaigning Events

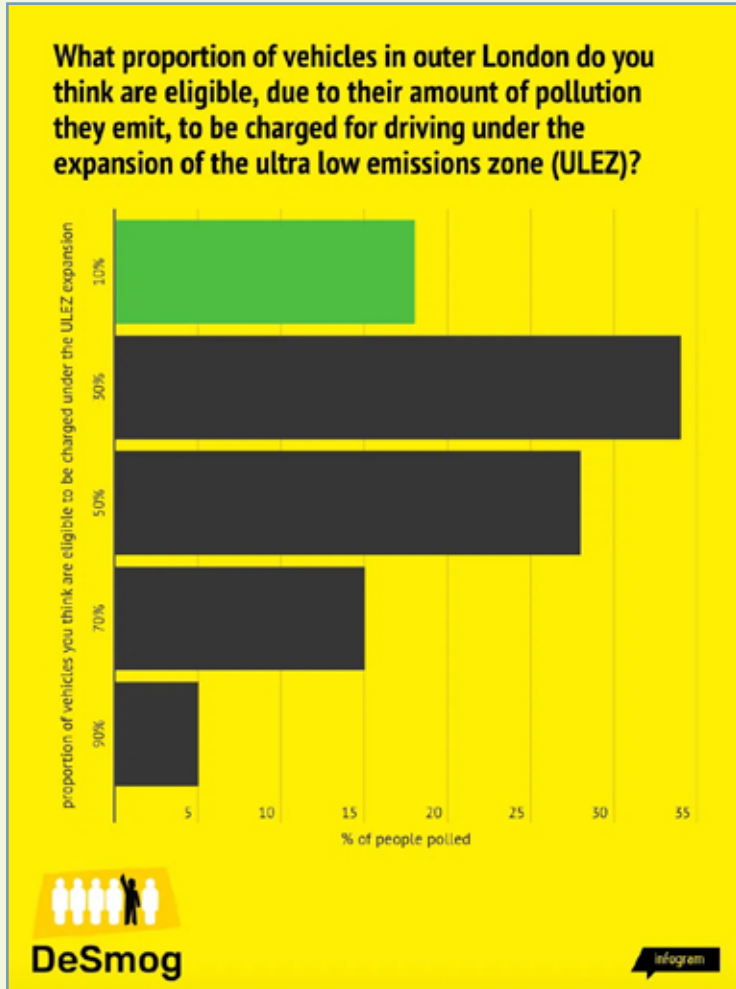
Saturday 9 September	Next 'Speakers Corner' event, hosted by campaigners against the West Cumbria Coal Mine in Whitehaven.
Sunday 10 - Wednesday 13 September	TUC conference in Liverpool - Greener Jobs Alliance will be co-hosting a fringe meeting on the Sunday with CACCTU and PCS union.
Friday 15 - Sunday 17 September	Global actions to end fossil fuels - This is an international call-out, and from discussions so far it is likely that it will include regional demos and events around the UK.
Sunday 1 October	Protest at Tory conference, Manchester
Friday 6 - Sunday 8 October	Green Party Conference, Brighton
Friday 6 Oct - Sunday 8 October	Global Climate Jobs conference , The Netherlands. There will be an open call on July 31st at 2pm CEST for people/organisations interested in getting involved or supporting. Register to get the link here.
Saturday 7 - Tuesday 10 October	The World Transformed , Liverpool - Programme to be announced.
Sun 8 - Wednesday 11 October	Labour Party Conference, Liverpool
Saturday 9 December	COP28 global day of action



Green Bites

Graph of the Month

Omnisis Poll for Desmog carried out on 27th and 28th July shows how public perception of the ULEZ wildly overestimates the number of vehicles affected by it. Fewer than one in five knew that only one car in ten is liable for a charge (as shown in the green column. From [desmog](#)



The same poll shows that

- 17 percent of people are less likely to vote for the Conservative Party if it delays “some of its policies to achieve net zero”, versus just 13 percent who are more likely...
- 13 percent of people said that the government is doing well on climate change, with 58 percent believing that it is not.
- 74 percent of under-40s said that the government is not doing well on climate change and net zero. Ed

“Patients move to London from places with cleaner air and tell me that they experience coughs they never had before and that they can’t exercise for so long without getting short of breath. They usually think that they’ve lost fitness but I believe that they are experiencing the effects of air pollution.”

Dr Jackie Applebee London GP

Stats of the Month

3,700

The number of fake Twitter accounts used to “amplify” anti-Ulez tweets from genuine accounts, in an apparent attempt to make the opposition seem more significant. Doing this on such a scale would cost around £44,000. [From the Guardian](#)

23

The number of fire engines that are unavailable in London as we mark the anniversary of record high temperatures. [From FBU](#)

0.2%

How much methane leakage from natural gas systems makes it as damaging as using coal. From a study in [Environmental Research Letters](#).

Website of the Month

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water. If you are going on holiday in the UK, here’s [Greenpeace’s interactive map](#) showing sewage spills all along the coast. Another aspect of “everyday life” being “disrupted” by the “tiny, self obsessed bunch of zealots” who run our water companies, as the Daily Mail might put it.

Irony of the Month

The Uxbridge anti ULEZ demo on July 9th assembled at the Harefields Rd/Oxford Road roundabout. According to Imperial College’s pollution [monitoring app](#), the level of air pollution in that postcode is in the 96th percentile. And breathe...

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