



## Editorial: Victories and success stories

*This is Catherine Porritt's speech to the Yorkshire and Humber TUC Conference earlier this month, which I think strikes the right tone for where we are now. Ed.*

It is easy to be disillusioned with the last few weeks of national politics, with the rhetoric of division being stoked up.

Even more so when we think of the challenges of addressing the Climate Crisis- but we must, because all of our futures depend on it.

- In February Global temperatures for the first time exceeded 1.7degrees, over pre- industrialised temperatures.
- For the whole of last year, for the first time, Global average temperatures were at 1.5 degrees for the entire year. The Climate Tipping point seems to be here, and faster than the UK is planning for.

But I am not here to depress you, when we have victories and success stories of how to get out of this mess, to consider and build on.

On Thursday I was in Leeds outside the WYCA offices when the West Yorkshire Mayor decided to go for the Bus Franchising model for Public control.

A Better Buses campaign started years ago, with a few activists collecting signatures for petitions in bus stations, but now West Yorkshire has taken a major step forward. Plans for reliable, cheap, clean, zero carbon and efficient buses for West Yorkshire are on the way.

Dream big, start small, and we can make progress.

So we all need to work out where we can find a place to influence change at all levels

Last year we called for all unions to appoint and train Green Reps. This year we call for all unions across the region to support these efforts.

In the NEU we have now developed the role of Green Reps and the first two training courses have been fully booked.

## Contents

- Editorial
- How to support Ex GKN Firenze worker's occupation
- Drax: 1. Greenwashing and Jobswashing While We Foot the Bill. Drax 2. For a worker led transition
- Promoting Climate Literacy in Canada's Construction Industry
- Can we do it here? Next GJA SG
- Support for Fare Free London Campaign
- Correction. Sunak steps on the gas
- Going through the motions: 1 NEU Conference. 2 Achieving a Just Transition for Yorkshire and the Humber in 2024
- New Rules: Right to Repair: Social leasing scheme
- Events
- A Climate Change Conference in Afghanistan
- Mums for Lungs London #Mayor4CleanAir campaign
- Air pollution - all in a day's work?
- Green Bites

The reps now trained have energised the NEU Climate network with more educators in schools leading on Climate and sustainability initiatives.

With appropriate information from their union they have gone to their head teachers and asked for the Head to investigate funded solar panels, from Solar 4Schools, though it would be good if there was a proper plan to retrofit schools to zero carbon standards and not depend on Not for profits.

Other green reps have addressed fuel bills in schools and developed teaching materials that show financial savings for switching to LED bulbs.

Engaging pupil pester power has long term benefits for school budgets, but also gives information to students so that they can suggest to parents that they too, can switch to LED and save money.

This is the power of the unions in energising our members to take action, we have influence in our workplace, and much wider in our communities.

Other union green reps have been working on influencing policies within other workplaces – UNISON members and cyclists making it a workplace bargaining position to ask for cycle storage, have helped their employer's to reduce their businesses Scope 3 Carbon emissions; and improves air quality, and employee health as well.

I have seen the importance of engaging with other unions, employers, and other businesses at local Net Zero Partnerships.

We know there is a desperate shortage of lecturers and tutors in the low carbon technologies. Heat Pump companies cannot even find courses to send apprentices on, because college courses don't have staff to train them. And why would a heating engineer make the switch to teaching when pay in colleges is so much lower?

Once Highlighted, solutions become possible.

We need Just transition boards with full union engagement at local and national level to ensure there is comprehensive training and education at all levels.

Trades councils can champion local union engagement.

We need to make sure that fully funded retraining is possible for existing workers, to include course fees and living costs. First discussed at just transition boards, then as part of workplace negotiation.

As a movement we may face challenges, but we must remember the power and influence that we do have.

We have a channel of communication - direct to our members - and to their employers, democratic processes that all our members can engage in.

At all levels, all at once.

And, as a teacher, can I remind you all here today, you can help as parents and grandparents that you can support your children's school to address the Climate and Biodiversity Crises - ask the school what they are doing to teach about biodiversity and sustainability?

This is scarcely mentioned in the National Curriculum, and is easily forced out with the pressures on results for SATS and GCSEs. It is possible to do both, but takes imagination, and permission to develop alternative teaching materials.

We have seen a positive step with the development of a National Education Nature Park but it's voluntary; so all schools can register, but they may need to be asked by someone like you.

We can all have a positive influence in many ways.

As Secretary General, Antonio Guterres says: "*Our world needs climate action on all fronts: everything, everywhere, all at once.*"

## How to support Ex GKN Firenze worker's occupation

The occupation of their workplace by former GKN workers in Firenze Italy is at a critical point. They have produced prototype cargo bikes for local use, but the current owner of the plant sent in goons to smash the electricity supply on 1 April.

Here's what you can do:

1. Donate to and share our [fundraiser!](#)
2. Watch the recent [solidarity meeting](#) with updates from the occupation
3. Pass the [model motion](#) in your union branch or Trades Council.
4. Download and print [our leaflet](#) to spread the word.
5. Organise your own fundraiser locally - [show the Reel News film](#) for a helpful introduction to the GKN struggle.

[Find all these links and the info you need here.](#)

The campaign here is almost 75% of the way to its initial target of £1,000, but needs your help to raise as much as possible to support the GKN Factory Collective's popular shareholding campaign.



# Drax: Greenwashing & Jobswashing While We Foot the Bill

As the climate emergency worsens, high emission industries are determined to make emission reduction plans seem electorally impossible; portraying them as attacks on jobs and communities economically reliant on these industries. Whether it's fossil fuel extraction or burning trees for energy, those profiting from these industries have a vested interest in making it seem that this is the only way to protect or create jobs. These misleading claims sit alongside the greenwashing of polluting industries through false assertions about the green credentials of the technologies – it's sales talk, it's ruthless, and it's a con.

The move of Drax Power Station from burning coal to trees was presented as key to the green transition, winning them generous subsidies. In the last year alone, Drax received **£850 million in green subsidies**, despite making record profits of **£1.2 billion for its shareholders**.

While Governments decided to classify burning wood biomass as carbon neutral, that doesn't make it a reality. Drax is the **UK's single largest carbon emitter**, and the world's biggest tree burner, sourcing from some of the world's **rarest and oldest forests**. Per unit of energy generated, **burning wood biomass emits as much carbon as coal** - yet institutionalised greenwashing allows the UK to discount these emissions. While you can regrow trees, you cannot regrow complex ecosystems or forests; it takes between **44-104 years** to reabsorb carbon emitted from burning trees - time we do not have.

In the Southern US, Drax has repeatedly been accused of **driving environmental racism** through pellet production sites emitting dangerous pollutants, linked to a range of respiratory and pulmonary health issues. Workers at Drax in Yorkshire are exposed to the same pollutants as those abroad, with reports of them **falling ill from exposure to biomass burning**.

It's a tale as old as time - corporations polluting communities and harming workers' health while others reap the profits. And in this case, the UK Government claims to balance its green energy figures; at the expense of bill payers, communities, forests and our planet.

Drax claims that through adding Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS), it can produce '**carbon negative**' energy, despite it never being successfully scaled, helping to offset emissions from other sectors - a claim accepted by the Government, inevitably delaying the action required to actually decarbonise.



Photo: Stop Burning Trees Coalition

The Government is **currently considering extending current subsidies** (due to expire in 2027) for Drax until the point that BECCS materialises. This would mean wasting billions more on a high-carbon, polluting industry that's harming forests and communities around the world.

Drax has been feeding press reports that building BECCS would create **10,000 jobs**; although after two years of publicly challenging these figures, it has now begun to admit this is only during **'peak construction'**. According to Drax, once BECCS is operational there will be 'up to' **375 permanent direct jobs**.

Ember estimates that BECCS at Drax will require **£43.34bn of public subsidy** over 25 years, paid for through consumers' bills. Meaning, the 375 permanent jobs - if they materialise - would be costing the taxpayer £1.7 billion every year, to generate only a fraction of the UK's energy needs, with the associated harms of continued biomass burning to forests, communities and biodiversity.

Drax, and the wider biomass and carbon capture industry, rests upon a fragile foundation of greenwash and **jobswash**. For years, fossil fuel companies have sought to develop the narrative that jobs are fundamentally at odds with a green transition; this

narrative has been picked up and adapted to Drax's greenwash, framing Drax as vital to the creation of green jobs.

So what is a truly green alternative? This money could be spent on creating thousands of jobs that actually bring down the cost of energy by rapidly building out genuine renewables, or slashing the energy needs of households through a retrofitting program.

Workers deserve better than fairy tale promises of carbon capture jobs; planning and investment is needed now to support the transition from high carbon industries. We cannot allow the narrative of a just transition and green jobs to be co-opted by greenwashing corporations like Drax.

The **Stop Burning Trees Coalition** has been working over the past two years to gradually build up relationships with workers and unions, supporting Drax workers strikes, and working closely with local TUCs to begin to look at what a just transition for Drax could look like. This cannot be done by climate campaigners alone. It requires solidarity and collaboration amongst workers, campaigners and communities around the world impacted by Drax.

*Merry Dickinson: Stop Burning Trees Coalition*



The Stop Burning Trees Coalition in Whitehall on March 5th. Photo Crispin Hughes

# FOR A WORKER LED

# TRANSITION AT DRAX

Basically, Drax is very difficult.

- Growing vast forests only to fell them, ship them halfway around the world, and burn them is obviously not environmentally sustainable (especially if the trees are not in fact from new growth but virgin forest).
- Nor is it economically sustainable in a market and subsidies economy which is moving ever further from favouring carbon intensive energy generation. No one expects that Drax will still be doing this in thirty years, even if they get their carbon capture system up and running. And, of course, in several ways, that's not terrible.

As a species dependent on a stable climate and representatives of organisations which extend meaningful solidarity to workers across the world, we need to transition away from this kind of energy generation. And, our unions are at pains to stress that, outside of levels of pay for some directly employed workers, Drax is not a good place to work.

But it is a place where many people do work, and it's a business that directly and indirectly supports an enormous number of other jobs and livelihoods in the Selby area and beyond. True trade unionists cannot take the position that Drax must disappear overnight, because this is a position in opposition to the direct interests of thousands of workers.

Rather, trade unions need to be intimately involved in careful, flexible, and realistic planning to protect our members and the communities in the Selby area from this precarious and difficult employer.

That means insisting, in the first place, that the plant becomes rapidly greener and more ethical and that

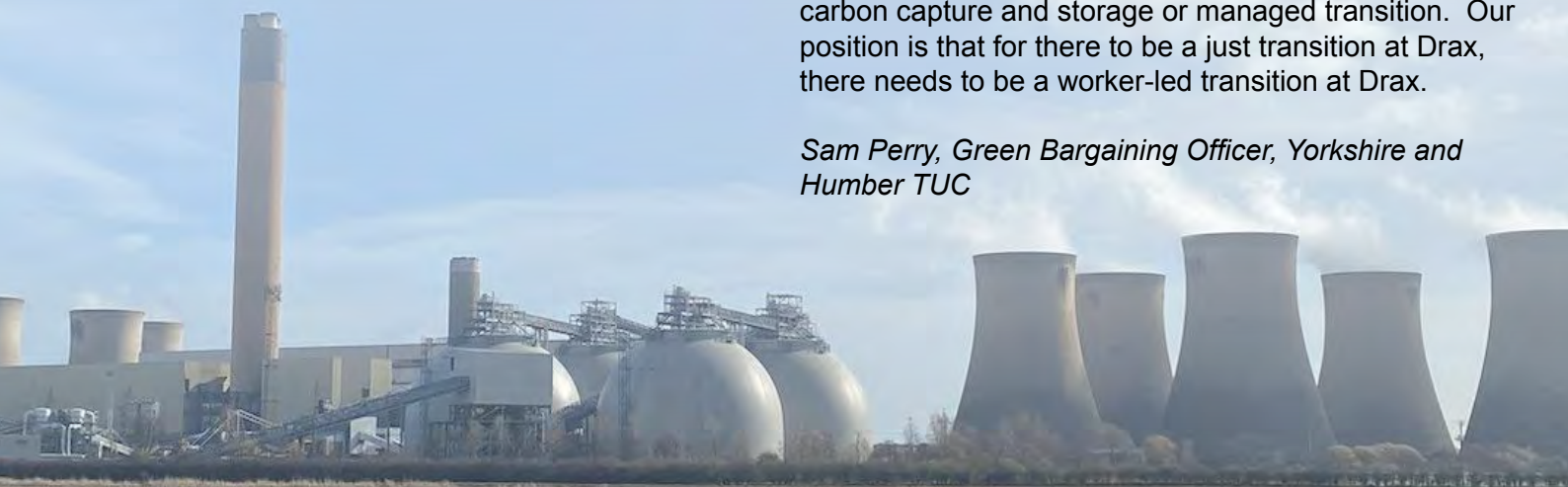
workers and their unions are involved in planning that transition. If this fails, is too slow, or becomes impossible, we will then, with full union involvement and only with training and job guarantees for all direct and (the considerable number of) indirect employees, need to move towards the plant going through a period of managed winding up.

How that's looking at the moment is that we're working with Drax's unions and management to ensure that carbon capture is brought online as soon as possible and at the least cost to taxpayers, that the supply chain and wood sourcing is sorted out, and that existing Drax workers directly benefit from the changes.

But also, that this happens alongside Drax improving workplace relationships, democratising decision making and benefits, and committing to protecting livelihoods over the long term.

We also need to work closer with local politicians to ensure that workers and the local community are at the heart of all decision-making, whether the final route ends up being effective and ethical bioenergy with carbon capture and storage or managed transition. Our position is that for there to be a just transition at Drax, there needs to be a worker-led transition at Drax.

*Sam Perry, Green Bargaining Officer, Yorkshire and Humber TUC*



# BUILDING IT GREEN: Promoting Climate Literacy in Canada's Construction Industry



**BUILDING IT  
GREEN**   
WITH CANADA'S BUILDING TRADES UNIONS

**Climate change is having an increasing impact on the Canadian construction industry, affecting the work and working conditions of union members and the building code standards which they implement. Provincial, territorial and the Federal Government have enacted increasingly tough climate measures in recent years. And, they have announced plans for much more stringent targets for the industry in the coming years to promote low carbon or net zero building standards which they expect building workers to implement.**

Canada's Building Trades' Unions (CBTU) play a major role in supporting its apprenticeship system, accounting for about one third of its skilled trades' graduates in English Canada. Its 14 affiliated unions, representing all the major construction trades, operate 195 training schools. These are funded by negotiated contributions in collective agreements with building contractors. Provincial and territorial governments pay union centres for the classroom portion of the apprenticeship programs in which their apprentices are enrolled. Unions thus play a key role in delivering Canada's apprenticeship programs.

There is a national curriculum for all construction trades called the Red Seal Standards. This curriculum is the basis of the classroom content instructors teach in college and union apprenticeship programs. Its extremely detailed content defines the knowledge, skills and competencies apprentices must learn to pass the national exam to obtain the Red Seal credential certifying them to practice their specific trade across Canada.

The unions recognize that preparing the workforce for these changes is essential. However, they also noted that the Red Seal curriculum for apprentices contained absolutely no information about climate change. In the summer of 2021, the CBTU successfully applied to the Federal Government to fund a project designed to fill this major gap in the curriculum under its Union Training and Innovation program which allocates \$50 million per year to union training initiatives.

The CBTU's \$4.5 million "Building it Green" project includes a research component to identify best practices internationally, a curriculum development component to build the actual curriculum content and an evaluation component to test the effectiveness of the new curriculum in pilots now being implemented in selected union training centres. The project is overseen by an Advisory Committee composed of representatives of each of the **CBTU's 14 member unions**.

The goal of the "Building it Green" project is to provide approximately 1,000 union apprenticeship instructors across Canada with the information on climate change



*Learning in progress: Photo John Calvert*

they will need to teach it in their classrooms. It will also include the curriculum apprentices need to learn about climate change and additional material to enable journey workers to learn this as well. The current version of the new curriculum includes a general module dealing with the overall impact of climate change on the industry and its workforce. To this is added trade specific modules which are tailored to the actual work performed by the members of each of the 14 building trades unions. Rather than being simply an 'add on' to the existing trades' curriculum, project designers assume that it will be woven into how various elements of the existing curriculum are taught.

The Building it Green project was announced prominently at the 2022 CBTU National Convention and presented to the wider industry and the general public in a [Webinar on February 15, 2024](#).

"Building it Green" will be one of two designated workshops at the upcoming 2024 National Convention. There are discussions now about sharing the curriculum with other training facilities in Canada that are not operated by the building trades unions to expand its impact in the rest of the industry.

The project has had an impact on the national Red Seal system. In July 2023, the Red Seal Secretariat announced that it wanted climate literacy to be included in the curriculum of all Red Seal Trades. To reinforce this change, it posted a statement on its web site to alert the industry, including trades' instructors, that climate change now must be incorporated into their classroom instruction programs.

The decision to request funding for the Building it Green project represents a major step in facilitating discussions about the role of labour in addressing climate change in the construction industry and a signal that the CBTU is now attempting to exercise leadership on this issue.

*John Calvert: Associate Professor (retired), Simon Fraser University.*

## How can we do that here?

John is a member of the academic team that has been researching the issue of climate literacy for the CBTU project and will be leading a discussion on how this was done at the May GJA Steering Group at lunchtime on May 13th (in person at UCU HQ in Carlow St or online). Linda Clarke will talk about similar projects in Europe. We will send a link to supporters nearer the time.

**Sign up for the Newsletter to ensure that you get an invite.**

# Support for FARE-FREE LONDON Campaign

Over the last month Unions representing transport workers in London have started to indicate support.

- The RMT Bakerloo line branch has passed a motion calling for free public transport, and that is now going to other bodies in that union representing those who work for Transport for London.
- The campaign was well received at the Transport Action Network national conference last month, and will be at the Campaign Against Climate Change conference on 13 April in London.

Members at the Unite Community branch in East London expressed support and will spread the word.

The campaign has produced [a podcast](#) with Christian Wolmar.

The campaign aims (two-page summary) and a campaign briefing can be found at [farefreelondon.org](http://farefreelondon.org).

The campaign organising group will meet on Wednesday 10 April, in the evening. All are welcome: email [info@farefreelondon.org](mailto:info@farefreelondon.org) for more info.

## Correction. Sunak steps on the gas

In the last edition, we reported that the government was sticking to its heat pump directive against pressure, and a mass disinformation campaign from the gas industry, to scrap it. However, this directive was due to come into force on 1 April this year. True to its record on everything else, the government is now delaying it by "at least a year".

This is in the context of a report by the National Audit Office (NAO) that heat pump installations would need to accelerate 11-fold if the government is to reach its target for **600,000 heat pumps installed in homes** every year by 2028, with the number installations by December 2023 running at less than half the number anticipated. Epic fail!

Sunak's simultaneous decision to propose a new wave of gas fired power stations may be a dead duck however, as the industry itself considers any energy gap can be made up, if need be, by upgrading existing power stations, so there is no need to build new ones; making any investment in them financially suicidal. Clarity from Labour over what its intentions are in government on these matters are, however, vital. Gas can in no way be considered one of the "industries of the future" Ed

# Going through the motions

NEU Conference has just voted for a motion for the union to campaign



1. For the level of state led investment needed to address the crisis and make adequate compensation for the UK's huge historic contribution to greenhouse gases.
2. For a NEU year of climate activism, along with other unions, by no later than 2026 with all appropriate organising and operational support starting now to highlight and amplify our response to the climate emergency and the role of Environment officers within Districts.
3. No new fossil fuel exploration
4. A National Climate Service to oversee national planning and Just Transition bodies in every sector, including: retraining workers in contracting sectors; guaranteeing union rights in expanding sectors; promoting direct labour organisations; public and community ownership and coordinating across government a huge public education campaign to fulfil Article 12 of the Paris Agreement
5. A specific just transition body within the education sector both to facilitate that campaign and oversee plans to retrofit every school, college and university to zero carbon standard by 2030, with an aim of becoming net energy generators.
6. Call upon Districts to establish local versions of this structure.
7. Districts to call upon members to work with sustainability leads to build Teach the Future's Curriculum for a Changing Climate into long term planning.



*James Hanna - District Environmental Officer, Alex Green – Let's Go Zero 2030, Sarah Green – Young Workers Officer Greenwich and Jenny Cooper - NEU National Executive and COP 27 and 28 participant, at the NEU Climate Change Network fringe meeting.  
Photo James Cartwright*

## Yorkshire and Humber TUC conference



### Achieving a Just Transition for Yorkshire and the Humber in 2024

The backdrop to the Yorkshire and Humber TUC annual conference in Leeds this March was the looming history of the last great unjust transition.

Forty years ago, the miners' strike saw hundreds of thousands of comrades down tools rather than submit to the role of victim in a managed decline dictated from above. The eventual, hard-fought victory that the Tories wrested from the starving hands of the families of our region led to a generational depression in Yorkshire and the virtual collapse of many of our communities.

We know the results of an economy planned without us. Disempowering workers disempowers communities and destroys lives. To impose change without consent is the ultimate injustice for our movement.

Yet we live in a time full of change. Decoupling our economy from fossil fuels is not only necessary for our own health, physical safety, and economic viability, but as an act of solidarity for our comrades in less hospitable climates and under even more difficult regimes. We must transition how we work, what we work on, and what we work with.

The injustice of the class war of the 'eighties was not the closure of the pits, but the way and speed with which this was done. It was done without us and against us.

We can't let this happen again. The green transition must be the workers' transition. If we don't force our voice on decision-makers and convince our politicians and bosses to listen, we will be back in the role of victim.

Conference heard repeatedly that 2024 must be the year that trade unionists take the reins. We can't risk waiting for employers' plans or the plans of the next government. Brandishing our well-formed, democratically legitimate, worker-focused, long-term workers' transition plans, we need to set the direction of travel.

The watchword of 2024 must be our plan. The transition can be done without significant job losses, without loss of pay and hard-won benefits, without workers paying for their own upskilling. The transition to a greener economy can be the transition



# Going through the motions

to safer, more fulfilling, better paid, and more secure work. But it won't be if we are not in the driving seat.

In March, the Yorkshire and Humber TUC conference heard from a great panel on how this will be achieved.

We heard that our Nordic comrades have a saying: 'We're not afraid of the new technology; we're afraid of the old'. Reijo Paananen, General Secretary of the Nordic IndustriAll Federation, explained that if our movement simply grasps tighter what we already have and buries its head in the face of change, we'll be left behind: We must be constantly innovating about how we organise and regularly readjusting our campaign goals. Static red lines and ambitions lead to deadlock and losses for workers. Unions in the advanced guard, Reijo said, shape the future for workers.

And Vera Trappmann, Professor of Comparative Employment Relations at the University of Leeds, was able to corroborate this with examples from her research. Where unions win inclusion in designing the transition process, we see outcomes like in Germany where fossil fuel corporations (assisted by a government lobbied hard by unions) are retaining workers on their books for up to two years while they retrain full time for completely new green roles. This no-gap employment transition in action is the very opposite of the transition to the dole or the transition to entry-level jobs that threaten our members in the UK, and yet is eminently actionable for our heavy industry sector workers.

Ellen Robottom from the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group has one foot in the camp of climate activism and the other in the trade union movement, and she told conference that the split between the two was artificial and unhelpful. Yes, there are some climate-first activists, but there are also just transition activists who recognise that brutal exploitation of nature and brutal exploitation of workers are two sides of the same coin. Praising the motion that passed at conference calling for no new fossil fuel sites, she recommended that unions look at joint transition forums, citizens assemblies bringing together workers, the local community, and environmentalists to find joint solutions to exploitative capitalism.

Just Transition Wakefield is an example of something similar: An alliance of unionists, community representatives, and local politicians which exists to coordinate and consolidate just transition thinking across a district. Catherine Porritt, NEU activist and cofounder of JTW, told conference how this group was shaping local authority climate policy and working constructively with council officers to

build worker-friendly synergies between SMEs, communities, and council policies, while amplifying the voices of workers within local transition planning.

For Sarah Wooley, General Secretary of the BFAWU, unions seeking to win for their workers have to stay on their toes. She reminded conference that winning with different employers requires different tactics, but worker engagement in the process is always central. She recommended that unions sow the seeds of a just transition widely and quickly: Some of these seeds will blossom immediately, others will have longer gestation periods, and others still may need to be sown many times before there's any growth at all. For this reason, her union is working very constructively with some employers, while prioritising education and movement building across the piece.

Union power comes from this kind of deliberate work. Our members number in the millions, but our power is also difficult to wield, cumbersome when compared to the heartless speed of unaccountable capitalism. David Whyte, Professor of Climate Justice at Queen Mary University of London, thus asked how we organise, where are our strengths. How can we strike over climate change? How can we slow down production to force just transition discussion? What targeted action is desirable and winnable?

The mood was clear from our panel that 2024 must be a year of action. The transition is underway and it's largely being done without us. But our movement is a movement of hope and innovation. We have the numbers, the educational resources, the connections, the models, and the will to significantly shape what is to come. The question is whether we'll use it.

*Sam Perry Green Bargaining Officer, Yorkshire and Humber TUC*



*Just Transition Panel discussion: left to right: Vera Trappmann, Sarah Wooley, Ellen Robottom, Reijo Paananen, David Whyte, Catherine Porritt, Sam Perry. Photo Yorkshire and Humber TUC. Photo Yorkshire & Humber TUC.*

## New Rules

**Right to Repair** The [EU has made a directive](#) to promote the repair of broken or defective goods (the R2R) directive, designed to make it easier for consumers to seek repair instead of replacement with a new obligation for producers to repair products even after legal guarantee has expired.

## Social Leasing Scheme

France now has a '**social leasing scheme**' - where people in low-paid, high mileage jobs (like carers) can get government support to lease an electric car for €100 a month. [Possible have launched a campaign](#) for carers and other essential workers to be eligible for such a scheme in the UK too. This would save them roughly £500 a year each in running costs, while eliminating the accumulated carbon emissions of five hours driving every day.

### 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.

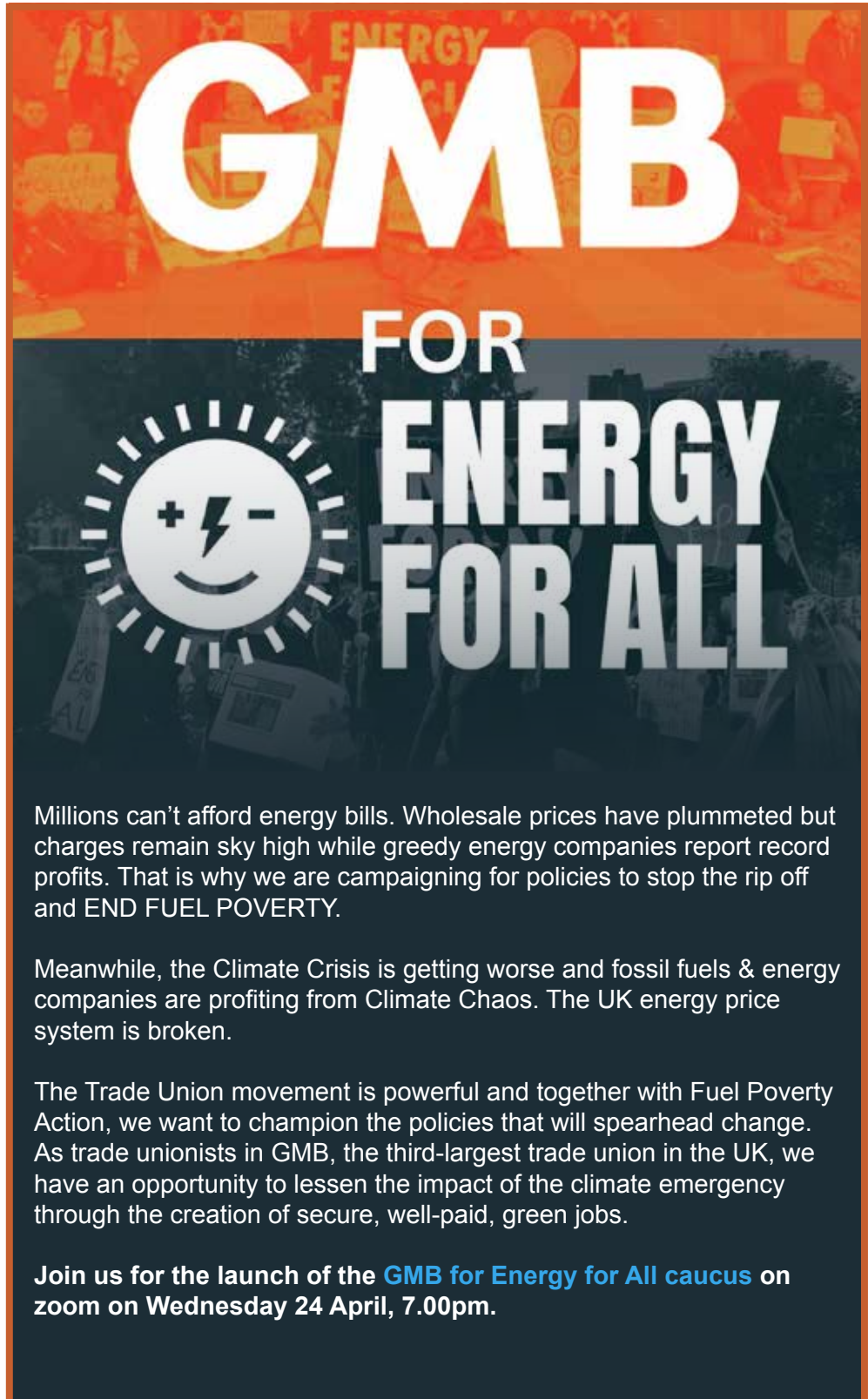


**HEAT STRIKES**  
**WORKPLACE TEMPERATURE & CLIMATE JUSTICE**  
Join our online session  
Wed 10th April - 6.30pm

With:

- Janet Newsham, Hazards Campaign
- Nuala Mai Gathercole Lam, Rapid Response Unit
- Clara Paillard, Unite the Union & Tipping Point UK (facilitator)
- Ian Hodson, President of the Bakers, Allied and Food Workers Union

HAZARDS CAMPAIGN  
TIPPING POINT  
STRIKE HOT GIRL SUMMER  
STRIKE WHILE IT'S HOT  
SUMMER OF DISCONTENT  
HEAT STRIKE STRIKE  
BAKERS FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION



**GMB**  
**FOR ENERGY FOR ALL**

Millions can't afford energy bills. Wholesale prices have plummeted but charges remain sky high while greedy energy companies report record profits. That is why we are campaigning for policies to stop the rip off and **END FUEL POVERTY**.

Meanwhile, the Climate Crisis is getting worse and fossil fuels & energy companies are profiting from Climate Chaos. The UK energy price system is broken.

The Trade Union movement is powerful and together with Fuel Poverty Action, we want to champion the policies that will spearhead change. As trade unionists in GMB, the third-largest trade union in the UK, we have an opportunity to lessen the impact of the climate emergency through the creation of secure, well-paid, green jobs.

Join us for the launch of the [GMB for Energy for All caucus](#) on zoom on Wednesday 24 April, 7.00pm.

# Sat 13 April London

## Climate Jobs

## Climate Justice

### What struggles do we need to win and how?

One day conference hosted by the Campaign  
against Climate Change trade union group



#### Discussions to include:

- **What's the balance sheet on climate in trade unions? Are we going backwards in the trade union movement?** With Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, BFAWU; John Moloney, Asst Gen Sec, PCS; Tyrone Scott, War on Want, Ian Mitchell, formerly Silverwood Colliery; Suzanne Jeffery, Campaign against Climate Change

#### Workshops (morning)

- **A National Climate Service - why the market can't deliver a plan for the climate.** Round table trade union discussion with speakers including John Moloney, PCS; Sarah Woolley, BFAWU, Liz Wheatley, Unison, Jenny Patient, researcher and former TUC Project Officer for Just Transition in Yorks & Humber
- **Greenwash and Jobswash - the false solutions which trade unions should oppose, not support, and why it matters.** Speakers including Merry Dickinson, Stop Burning Trees Coalition; Pascoe Sabido, Corporate Europe Observatory; Ellen Robottom, CACCTU and Leeds TUC; Jonathan Essex, Green House Think Tank
- **Climate Justice and Palestine - no climate justice on occupied land.** With Ellie Kinney, Conflict and Environment Observatory; Anne Alexander, co-founder of the MENA solidarity network; and Manal Shqair, Palestinian researcher, author and contributor to the book "Dismantling Green Colonialism"
- **Climate, Jobs and Public Services - fighting for public services and public ownership that delivers for people and planet.** With Pallavi Devulapalli, Keep Our NHS Public; Simon Pirani, Fare Free London; Fran Postlethwaite, Better Buses South Yorkshire; Katrine Williams, PCS; Stephen Smellie, Unison

#### Workshops (afternoon)

- **Sustainable food production and decent work - organising across the food system.** With Sarah Woolley, Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union; Martin Empson, CACCTU, and author on class struggle, landwork and environmentalism and a speaker from Platform's food justice project.
- **War, fossil fuels and climate - why defence diversification is a key battle for the climate.** Speakers including Khem Rogaly, Common Wealth, Sam Mason, CND
- **Ending fossil fuels and renewable energy - what would a workers plan for energy look like?** With Ruby Earle, Platform; Pete Cannell, Scot.E3; and Professor Linda Clarke
- **Racism and migration - social justice and climate justice for North and South.** Speakers including Zita Holbourne, PCS and BARAC (Black Activists Rising Against Cuts); Zamzam Ibrahim, Students Organising for Sustainability, John Sinha, Campaign against Climate Change

Buy tickets and get full  
details [here](#).



# Understanding Working Conditions in New York State's Solar Industry

Cornell ILR's Climate Jobs Institute is excited to share a first look at the results of our exploratory study on the working conditions of New York State solar workers.

Join us on Friday, April 26, 8:30 AM - 11:00 AM US time (12:30 - 3PM UK time) to discuss the findings uncovered in this study—drawing from over 250 survey responses from on-the-ground solar workers—followed by a panel discussion with workers and leaders in this sector. The event will also feature remarks from New York State Senator and Labor Committee Chair Jessica Ramos.

Please register here by Wednesday, April 24, to watch the livestream



Photo ILR Climate Jobs Institute

# A Climate Change Conference in Afghanistan



In February I had the good fortune to attend an international climate change conference at the University of Nangarhar in Afghanistan. I had not been back to the country since I lived there for eighteen months, 51 years ago. The conference was an emotional roller coaster for me, and surprising.

The background was that Afghanistan has had recurring long droughts caused by climate change since the early 1970s. This time the drought had lasted two and a half years.

The drought was so severe that the UN World Food Program had to feed 20 million people last winter, out of a total population of 40 million. The winter before, it was 41 million.

Just after I left, the rains finally arrived, and next year the harvest should be OK. But more long droughts will come again, and worse.

This is happening in one of the poorest countries in the world, which has just emerged from 20 years of foreign occupation and 43 years of war. Four fifths of the population make their living from the fields or



**Green Party**

# Green Left

## OPEN MEETING POPULATION, MIGRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

22 April 2024 7-9pm via zoom

**Speakers:**  
Nicole Haydock: *Green Left*  
Alan Thornett: *author of 'Facing the Apocalypse: Arguments for Ecosocialism'*  
Peter Allen: *Green Party International Committee*  
Joseph Healy: *Anti-Capitalist Resistance*

**Chair:** Beccy Sawbridge, Dover Town Councillor

*'One of the controversies of green politics is population. Once this was framed around concerns about seemingly continual world population growth, but recently there seems to be a shift to worries about populations ageing, stagnating or falling. As well as this, push and pull factors associated with climate change, wars and political instability increase migration, which is often politically exploited and met with draconian legislation.'*

herding animals. It is already one of the most arid places on earth. In addition, the United States has tried to draw an iron ring of sanctions to cripple the economy. This is what they have done before to Cuba, Iran and Vietnam to punish them for defeating the US.

At the conference there were 140 papers by more than 300 scholars and scientists, most from Afghan universities. They are isolated from international work on climate, and Afghanistan is the only country in the world banned from the COPs.

I was also surprised by the attitude of the new government. The Taliban sent seven government ministers to speak to the conference. They spoke at length, saying different things from each other, and had clearly been thinking hard. Not surprising, really, given that it is the most important issue facing the government.

They said they wanted Afghan academics and students to take climate change seriously. One minister said this is the most dangerous challenge the country has ever faced. Worse than the Americans, he said. I have written about the conference at more length, here, where I take up the important question of the politics and sexism of the Taliban, and argue that these are serious problems, but not enough reason to consign forty million people to climate hell.

*Jonathan Neale*

*PS. I told the Afghan academics I would try to organise another conference in Europe on climate change in Afghanistan. If you would be interested in helping, do get in touch with me at [@JonathanNealeA1](https://twitter.com/JonathanNealeA1) or [jonathannealeclimate@gmail.com](mailto:jonathannealeclimate@gmail.com).*

Photo: Jonathan Neale speaking at the Afghan Climate Change Conference



Photo Mums for Lungs

## Mums for Lungs London #Mayor4CleanAir campaign

We have three asks of the Mayoral candidates:

1. Commit to meet the latest WHO air pollution guideline limits. This needs a roadmap to meet interim targets by 2030 that includes phasing out diesel and wood burning.
2. Leadership on an effective London-wide strategy to roll out School Superzones.
3. Create a website for Londoners to access all air quality monitoring in one place, alongside the latest health evidence, modelling projections and reports.

[Read about the campaign.](#) More to come on how you can get involved.

## Air pollution - all in a day's work?

The Trade Union Clean Air Network (TUCAN) has been working hard to prepare resources for International Workers Memorial Day on 28 April.

The theme is 'climate risks for workers' and one of the outcomes of burning fossil fuels is the impact on worker's health. Our focus has been on indoor air pollution and we have committed to producing:

- A workers guide to indoor air pollution
- A briefing paper for lobbying political parties to introduce new exposure standards
- A short film to highlight the hazards and what can be done

Watch this space for the release of these resources at the end of the month.

# Green Bites

## Stats of the Month

20  
million

The number of people **displaced by climate impacts** every year at present

127

former oil and gas employees – including 49 industry bosses or senior executives – recruited into top government roles and ministerial advisory boards since 2011. **From the Ferret**

40,000

New jobs created in renewable energy and low carbon sectors in 2022, compared to 8,500 lost in oil and gas, so almost five gains for every loss **according to the ONS.**

0.1%

Percentage of global carbon emissions captured by CCS plants last year. Fossil fuel companies continue to use pledges of CCS as a get out of jail free card to allow business as usual to carry on. **From Open Democracy**

4X

**Cycleways in London** have quadrupled since Sadiq Khan was elected in 2016.

£1.2  
billion

The amount that Chinese battery firm EVE is **planning to invest** in a gigafactory outside Coventry that should create 6,000 jobs.

£50  
billion

The amount that **6 changes to wealth tax** could raise every year; enough to pay for Labour's watered down green investment pledge almost twice over

1,200

The number of EV charging points installed in UK supermarket car parks last year, including at 600 new sites. This is, however, only **10% of the total.** The recent practice of **rebuilding stores with large housing developments above them** will have a bigger impact on denting carbon emissions from shopping journeys.

## New on the Debate Blog

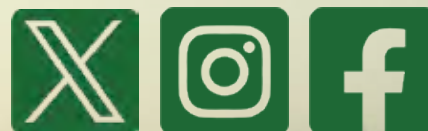
- **Clean Air in Tooting Market Campaign launched.**
- **Why do green jobs plans need a different politics and economics - part 1.** by Jonathan Essex
- **Why do green jobs plans need a different politics and economics - part 2.** by Jonathan Essex

## Quote of the Month

*"Earth is issuing a distress call. Fossil fuel pollution is sending climate chaos off the charts. Sirens are blaring across all major indicators. "There's still time to throw out a lifeline to people and planet, but leaders must step up and act now."*

*UN Secretary-General António Guterres*

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