



Editorial: The Stakes on July 4th

In a recent [survey by IZA](#), 83% of people in the UK said they wanted more action from the government to stop climate breakdown.

The climate vote survey we link to below shows that [not a single Conservative MP](#) has a good voting record on climate and their government has gone out of its way to try to mobilise people against action on it.

The fewer of them that come back, the better.

Whoever you vote for, the next government will be facing an acceleration of the degeneration of our environment, a divergence between current plans and targets that are both necessary and legally imperative, an increase in the costs of adapting to the impacts that are already occurring; and an international context in which the United States, which mainstream parties in the UK tend to defer to, could be going full rogue state on climate alongside its militarisation drive if Donald Trump is re elected.

Far from being a period of “stability” after chaos, we are heading into an even more tumultuous five years.

And, as Mike Childs, head of science, policy and research at Friends of the Earth, puts it, *“If Labour forms the next government, they will have to produce a comprehensive and lawful climate plan that meets our domestic carbon budgets and our international commitment to reduce emissions by two-thirds by 2030 – or face possible legal action if it falls short. Warm words on how to tackle an overheating planet are not enough. We need urgent action now.”*

We will need massive pressure through the labour movement and throughout society to back that up. Buckle in!

Paul Atkin Ed

Contents

- Editorial: The Stakes on July 4th
- Vote Climate
- Info Hub for General Election 2024
- Environmental Nakba in Gaza
- Why China’s CO2 emissions may have peaked in 2023
- OECD Shift in Energy Generation from Fossils to Renewables
- Lowestoft and the Existential Threat of Inadequate Flood Defences
- Health and safety enforcement under the spotlight
- New Deal and Just Transition in this year’s Higher Education (HE) union claim.
- Union conference round up. UNISON. BFAWU
- Events: Heat Strike Online Rally. TUC Webinar, Health and Safety in a Changing Climate. New Rules: EU Ecodesign regulation
- Green Bites

Environmental Nakba in Gaza

In the place of orchards, sandy beaches, and strawberry fields that were once the pride of Gazans, the coastal territory is now a **dystopian landscape** of military bases, craters, and ruins.



Photo: TrickyH commons.wikimedia.org/

“In northern Gaza, two-thirds of the land was agricultural - now there’s nothing left,” says Samar Safiya, a Gazan environmental activist.

“We are living through an environmental catastrophe that will engender other catastrophes in the future. When the tanks roll onto our land, they also destroy its fertility,”

With more than half of the population on the brink of starvation, the destruction of Gaza’s environment and food production capabilities is both an immediate concern and one with catastrophic long-term consequences.

Israeli bulldozers have razed fields and orchards to **clear a buffer zone** more than 300 metres deep along the northern border between Israel and the Gaza Strip. Of the 170 km² of farmland that existed in Gaza before the war - half the territory - a total of 40% has been destroyed. Two thousand agricultural buildings have also been razed in Gaza – including 90% of all greenhouses in the northern districts.

By targeting agricultural fields, Israel is attacking an important part of the Gazan economy and ecosystems. A joint study by the UN, the World Bank, and the European Union (EU) estimates the **damage to agriculture** at \$629 million.

Combined with the destruction of natural areas, waste treatment infrastructure, and debris removal, this amounts to over \$1.5 billion - not even counting environmental restoration and reconstruction costs.

This destruction is an integral part of an asserted Israeli strategy, particularly around the **border buffer zone**, over the last ten years.

“We regularly observed Israeli planes dropping herbicides on border agricultural areas at the beginning and end of the harvest seasons from 2014 to 2019, taking advantage of favourable winds to hit the maximum surface area,” says Lucia Rebolino of **Forensic Architecture**, which has published several reports on this **“herbicidal war”**.

Around 1,740 hectares of land have been cleared where the Israeli army has built a new road, called Route 749. This zone borders the **Wadi Gaza**, a natural reserve whose banks were *“once a region full of life and agriculture, with good infrastructure. Now it’s all destroyed, and Palestinians are forbidden to enter - it’s very dangerous,”* says Samar Safiya.

The greenhouse gas emissions generated during the first two months of the war in Gaza were greater than the annual carbon footprint of more than 20 of the world’s most climate-vulnerable nations, according to a **British-American study**.

It estimates that the climate cost of the first 60 days of Israel’s war is equivalent to burning at least 150,000 tons of coal.

The UN further stated that Israeli bombardments have created **37 million tons of debris**. *“That’s more than the whole of Ukraine in two years,”* points out Wim Zwijnenburg, a researcher on the effects of conflict on the environment at PAX, a Dutch organisation that has documented, and denounced, how Israel’s war **is making Gaza uninhabitable**.

Contamination by asbestos and heavy metals, dust and fine particles, toxic waste from hospitals and industries, and diseases spread by decomposing bodies. *“How are we going to dispose of all this debris, when there’s no waste infrastructure left standing?”* asked Zwijnenburg.

Some 70,000 tons of solid waste have accumulated in dumps that have sprung up all over the Gaza Strip - contaminating soil and waterways. At the same time, more than 130,000 cubic metres of water are discharged into the Mediterranean Sea every day, causing serious damage to underwater flora and fauna, **warns the UN.**

“Before the war, donors had invested large sums in the waste and water treatment system - it’s all been wiped out,” laments Wim Zwijnenburg. *“Thanks to satellite images, we can see how thousands of pollutants infiltrate the soil and groundwater, and even how toxic fumes make the air unbreathable,”* he explains.

“The destruction of land is a systematic genocidal practice in the same way as the destruction of food production, schools, and hospitals, which is well documented in situ,” says Lucia Rebolino of Forensic Architecture.

The **UN has opened an inquiry** into the destruction of the environment. These steps will have to wait until the end of the war before any conclusions can be reached.

*From a longer article in **The New Arab** by Philippe Pernot*



Vote Climate

Check out your constituency, the **voting record** of your local MP and info on candidates at **Vote Climate**. NB The total number of Conservative MPs who have a good or very good record is zero.

Info Hub

for General Election 2024
from Climate Justice Coalition.



[Click here for more details.](#)

Why China’s CO2 emissions may have peaked in 2023

- Wind and solar growth pushed fossil fuels’ share of electricity generation in China down to 63.6% in March 2024, from 67.4% a year earlier, despite strong growth in demand.
- The ongoing contraction of real-estate construction activity in China saw steel production fall by 8% and cement output by 22% in March 2024.
- Electric vehicles (EVs) now make up around one-in-10 vehicles on China’s roads, knocking around 3.5 percentage points off the growth in petrol demand.
- Some 45% of last year’s record solar additions were smaller-scale “distributed” systems, not large scale plants.

Full assessment from Carbon Brief

Photo Wikimedia commons

OECD Shift in Energy Generation from Fossils to Renewables

Electricity generation from fossil fuels amounted to 397.3 TWh in February 2024, exhibiting a decline of 5.2% (equivalent to 21.8 TWh) compared to February 2023. This reduction was largely driven by lower electricity output from coal, which experienced an 8.3% year-on-year decrease, followed by gas with a decrease of 3.3% year-on-year.

Electricity production from **renewable sources** increased by 11.4% y-o-y at 320.0 TWh in February 2024. This growth was primarily driven by increased electricity generation from wind power, with OECD Europe leading the trend with a notable 29.8% year-on-year increase, equivalent to 15.1 TWh.

From International Energy Agency

Lowestoft and the Existential Threat of Inadequate Flood Defences



Use Your Voice Lowestoft grew out of a project funded by Rights Community Action in March 2023 to create two murals in the town.

The idea was to use art to raise awareness of the impact of climate change and to encourage people to take positive action – hence the words ‘Use Your Voice’ on the second mural.

Those words sparked a conversation about public access to decision making that affects communities. They gave the group a name and an impetus to see what positive action could do to raise awareness of the challenges that climate change is bringing to coastal communities and at the same time point to the opportunity for positive change that this brings.

To build a climate resilient town requires genuine long term planning and planning implies opportunities to re-shape the built environment to better serve the needs of people. The first question was – and is – how resilient are Lowestoft’s flood defences right now.

In the course of our enquiry into Lowestoft’s flood resilience, we looked both at current defences and the planned improvements. Central to these improvements is the new tidal barrier. All the published flood assessments we have seen state that this barrier is an essential element of the flood resilience of the town.

Then in January it was announced that all work on Lowestoft’s tidal barrier was to be halted.

Given what we had been told about its central place in the viability of the town’s flood defences, this decision left us frankly bewildered. Millions of pounds were already spent on new flood walls around parts of the town that would be rendered effectively useless without this final piece of the jigsaw. What reasoning could be driving this decision? Replies to our questions to various agencies and to experts confirmed that no-one – not even DEFRA - was in a position to explain exactly what was going on.

What has become apparent is that a financial algorithm operated by DEFRA had ‘modelled’ (DEFRA’s word) 500 previously agreed flood defence schemes across the UK and calculated whether a community has enough value to be worth saving.

What has a community to do in order to be rewarded by this algorithm with a chance for a future? Well, high property prices are one thing that the algorithm clearly likes. The only catch with that is that it is tricky to keep your property and business values up if your town is living under threat of a tidal surge, insurers are refusing to re-insure your businesses as a result and outside investors are naturally put off by excessive risk.

Added to this, the algorithm is not (apparently) allowed to take into account the added value of investing in a community’s flood defences. The clear advantage

of using public funds to turn a spiral of uncertainty & decline into a one of support and growth is invisible to this metric.

We approached Peter Aldous, Lowestoft's MP, and asked if he would host a meeting in Westminster to which we could invite all the interested parties, including DEFRA & the Minister for Flooding. This meeting was held on the 25th April, standing room only, and although DEFRA and the minister were unable to attend, it was an opportunity for all the concerned parties to share what they knew and to consider what we need to do collectively.

The short answer: the metric needs to change. The idea that the future of coastal communities with hundreds of years of history and with huge potential can be placed in the hands of an imperfectly conceived financial algorithm has to be challenged. At the time of writing it has not yet been fully acknowledged that this is what is driving the decision. A more transparent account from DEFRA would be a big start.

And the openness could be extended to telling us who the other 499 communities are. 500 communities have had their future fed through an algorithm that has deemed them no longer worth protecting. Lowestoft learned its fate and began to ask questions. Another 499 communities need to be told.

What next for Use Your Voice Lowestoft?

1. Continue to pursue the questions that led us to Westminster and to cooperate with the wider community that has an interest in getting answers to them.
2. Work with this community on framing the solution we would like to see and putting it to DEFRA. This means people having access to a transparent decision-making process recognising the rationality and obvious good sense of investing in the future of communities and allowing them to own their assets and to draw on them for future growth.
3. We will be meeting with some school children in Lowestoft to ask them about the future they would like to see and to help them bring their voice to those who are currently making the decisions that will determine that future.

Chris Ellis: Use Your Voice Lowestoft



Health and safety enforcement under the spotlight

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Health and Safety met recently to hear a presentation from the Prospect Union that represents inspectors in the Health and Safety Executive.

Geoff Fletcher, the HSE Branch Secretary and President of Prospect's Public Services Sector introduced a report '*HSE under pressure: A perfect storm*'.

This highlights the dire state of the UK's regulatory body responsible for worker's health. The report is full of startling statistics highlighting how low the service has sunk in the last 14 years. Since 2010 its core funding has been slashed by 35%. Staff numbers have been cut by a similar percentage.

Commentating on the 2022-32 HSE Strategy Prospect says;

'The public has a reasonable expectation that if they or their loved ones are seriously injured at work, then an investigation will take place and negligent employers be held to account. That this is no longer happening is a shocking failure to secure justice, and a failure that can only get worse unless the decline in inspector numbers is reversed'

The event was attended by GJA and Hazards members along with union health and safety officers. The point was made despite all the talk about law and order that criminal offences are being committed and yet corporations and company bosses are not being held to account. Even when they are, it can take many years before it is brought to court.

The report does not mention climate risks as an area where enforcement is needed. Heat stress, air pollution and extreme weather events are all examples of demands on the HSE that are unlikely to be met given the available resources. Workers will increasingly need to take action to ensure that standards are being met. In the year when the theme for International Workers Memorial Day is 'Climate risks for workers' it is worrying that the HSE is in such dire condition

It will be vital that a new government increases the funding for worker protection. Anything less and the celebrations for 50 years of the Health, Safety at Work Act are going to ring hollow.

Graham Petersen

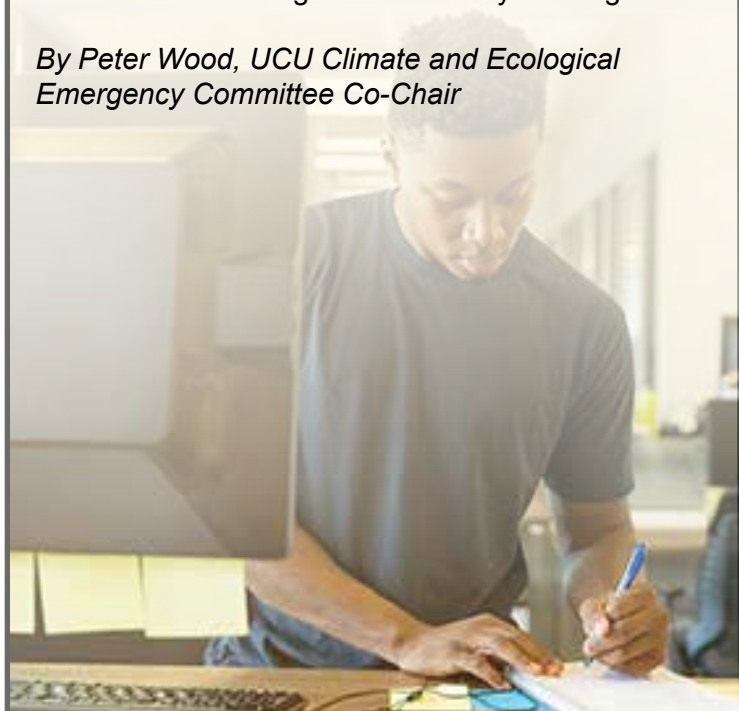
New Deal and Just Transition in this year's Higher Education (HE) union claim

Key asks include trade unions and employers collaborating to develop a proposal to the government for a '*Just Transition Commission for Higher Education*'. This would be for agreement in the Autumn 2024 negotiation cycle, with public release and communications by November 2024, in advance of COP29. It also calls for employers to commit to paid time (facilities time) for environmental reps at an institutional level.

UK HE has sector-wide negotiations in which the five trade unions (EIS, GMB, UCU, Unison and Unite) negotiate together on behalf of their members, with universities represented by UCEA, the employers association. The five trade unions' agreement to put environmental justice and sustainability into their core multi-nation negotiations is a material improvement in how the issue is addressed in the trade union movement. If an agreed proposal can be taken to an incoming Labour government it would represent a further mainstreaming of environmental action, but also a model for how that party's sectoral bargaining agenda could act to accelerate the release of additional sustainability funding.

The HE claim follows on from aligned commitments in the Joint Further Education England-only claim last year, which trade unions and the employers' Association of Colleges are currently working on.

By Peter Wood, UCU Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee Co-Chair



Union Conference Round Up:



UNISON

UNISON's Conference in Brighton between June 18 - 21st has a long and comprehensive motion from their National Executive Committee which includes the following action points.

1. Recognise and embed Climate Change as part of its wider organising strategy;
2. Continue to work with service users, community, NGO and green alliances on public sector workplace climate policies as they are developed and announced, calling for greater public investment to secure a Just Transition;
3. Support each service group and sector committee to develop a green bargaining and negotiating agenda at every level of the union;
4. Update the Code of Good Branch practice to include the new Environment Officer role;
5. Support each Region to coordinate regional branch Environmental Officer network meetings and activities;
6. Continue to pursue all outstanding, or ongoing, actions from the 2022 National Delegate Conference motion 93;
7. Work with the Labour Link to campaign for the reinstatement by Labour of the pledge to spend £28 billion each year on green investment;
8. Work with appropriate bodies to build combines within and across sectors, at the level of branches as well as nationally and globally, to develop common industrial strategies that contribute to a 'whole economy' approach to decarbonisation, including engagement with community and climate justice groups;
9. Agree a UNISON year of Climate Activism by no later than 2026 with all appropriate organising and operational support to highlight and amplify UNISON's response to the climate emergency and the role of the Environment Officer within branches;
10. Continue to work internationally to support the Global South and to ensure that a just transition for all is achieved for the public good and not private profit;
11. To endorse the call for a Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty and engage with the Labour Party, via Labour Link, and other political parties to highlight UNISON's support for the next UK Government to endorse the call for a FFNPT.

And to campaign for:

- a. Policies to address climate change and environmental degradation that are in the interests of workers and communities, and a plan for the forms of bargaining and industrial action to achieve them;
- b. Negotiated transition plans that guarantee protection for all workers in all sectors of the economy including across all equality strands, and as a minimum should cover jobs, wages, pensions, training and skills and trade union rights;
- c. Public ownership of key sectors such as energy, water, transport, mail, broadband, education, health and social care;
- d. A fair and progressive taxation system, accessing the wealth of one of the world's richest countries without asking working people to pay for a crisis they did not create;
- e. A National Climate Service to plan, coordinate, fund and ensure education/training for the workforce necessary to undertake the rapid and wide scale transformation to a decarbonised economy;
- f. Workers and their unions being directly and immediately engaged with government in designing and defining what the decarbonised industries and their workforces of the future look like;
- g. Solutions to the climate crisis that are in the interests of workers and communities, not capital.

*This motion from the NEC includes the action points from the **model motion being supported by the GJA and CACCTU**, that has also been separately submitted by Bristol and City of York. The commitment to a year of union action on climate by 2026 has also been passed by the NEU. If passed, the commitment to campaign for the restoration of Labour's £28 billion investment pledge and the further motion from Lothian Health to campaign for a National Just Transition Commission will be absolutely central for the trade union movement to unite around if we are to push the next government in the right direction. Ed*

Round Up:

**BAKERS
FOOD
AND ALLIED
WORKERS
UNION**



BFAWU Conference (8 -13 June) has five climate related motions.

- The **GJA/CACCTU model motion** is being put by the Executive Council.
- In addition there is a composite with Exec support opposing new Oil and Gas licences in the North Sea, Labour's retreat from its £28 billion investment pledge, and for the union to take action when the weather exceeds 36 C, support the Heat Strike call when the Met Office issues a severe weather warning and for the trade union movement to organise to lobby for a legal limit on workplace heat, building on BFAWU's existing "Cool it" campaign.
- Two other motions - That the Government should ban the 'emergency' use of bee-harming pesticides in the UK. and for statutory rights to green representatives in the workplace for paid time off for training and carrying out their duties and functions in this role are also being supported by the Exec.
- One motion - that the Union should encourage the government to change the zero-emission agreement, regarding petrol and diesel vehicles in 2035, to be postponed - is being opposed by it.

BFAWU
STRENGTH IN UNITY

New Rules:

EU Ecodesign Regulations

This affects all kinds of products, with some exceptions (cars, defence and security related products).

It introduces new requirements on product durability, reusability, upgradability and reparability, and sets rules on the presence of substances that inhibit circularity; energy and resource efficiency; recycled content, remanufacturing and recycling; carbon and environmental footprints; and information requirements, including a Digital Product Passport.

The Commission will be empowered to set ecodesign requirements by delegated acts and the industry will have 18 months to comply with them.



Parents for Future and Mums for Lungs Election Posters



General Election posters from Parents for Future/ Mums for Lungs and Ella Roberta Family Foundation can be ordered [here](#).

Events and Courses

UCU Course: Bargaining for a Green New Deal

This course will cover:

- why climate justice is a trade union issue
- preparing a Green New Deal (GND) claim
- building UCU locally - how to get members fully involved
- strengthening links with other unions, students and wider community
- campaigning around your green new deal claim.

[Full details here](#)

UCU
University and College Union

HEAT STRIKE

WORKPLACE TEMPERATURE & CLIMATE JUSTICE

ONLINE RALLY - 12 JUNE 7PM



Heat Strike Online Rally

Online Rally - 12 June 7.00pm

Speakers include:

- **Shelly Asquith** - Health, Safety & Wellbeing Officer at the TUC
- **Sebastiano Calleri** - National coordinator of Health & Safety in the workplace for the Italian Trade Union CGIL
- **Zarah Sultana MP**

We will hear about the importance of setting a national maximum working temperature in the UK as well as the experience of Italian workers in demanding a heat wave furlough scheme.

Heat at work is increasingly becoming a problem because of the Climate Crisis and it is important workplace reps, Health & Safety reps and our unions build alliances with the Climate Justice movement.

For more info on the Heat Strike, check out their [model motion](#) and resource pack. or watch the [online session about Heat Strike](#) from last month.

Events and Courses



Restore Nature Now

Saturday 22 June, we'll demonstrate with thousands to demand restoration of nature and action for a liveable climate.

It will be just 12 days before the General Election - let's make our voices heard!

Over 150 organisations had already signed up to support this national demonstration even before the general election was called.

[Read more about the Restore Nature Now march and its demands](#)

[Coaches to London](#)

Webinar: health and safety in a changing climate

Wednesday 3 July 2024 - 2pm to 3pm

This webinar will equip health and safety reps with the skills to protect their colleagues from climate change-related hazards.

Join our panel of experts who will raise awareness of the impacts of climate change on occupational health and safety, encourage organising around climate change, towards a just transition and introduce us to union initiatives which are making an impact.

We'll be joined by:

- **Rory O'Neill**, Editor of Hazards Magazine and OSH advisor to the International Trades Union Congress.
- **Sarah Lyons**, Lead Officer for Health, Safety and Environment, NEU, who will introduce the Joint Union Heatwave Protocol
- **Graham Petersen**, who will talk through some of the impact being made by the Trade Union Clean Air Network.

[Register here](#)

TUC

Changing the world
of work for good

Green Bites

Stats of the Month

\$7 Trillion

Total global fossil fuel subsidies in 2022. [From the IMF](#). It is estimated that to be on course for Net Zero by 2050 the world would have to invest \$4 Trillion a year in energy transition. Transferring the subsidy looks like a “win, win”.

£20 Billion

How much more fossil fuels were subsidised over renewables by the UK government between 2015 and 2023. From [LFF](#)

71%

[Higher sales of used EVs](#) in the UK in the first quarter of 2024 over the first quarter of 2023. Fossil fuel cars still account for 92% of all sales but these only grew by 2%. Overall, sales of all cars are 2.6% below pre covid levels.

80%

of people in Africa have to cook on open fires or on basic stoves, with [severe impacts on health, gender equality and the environment](#). Inhaling hazardous smoke from wood, charcoal, animal dung and agricultural waste is the second leading cause of premature deaths on the continent among women and children, who also miss out on opportunities for education and employment because of the time they spend gathering cooking fuel. See [IEA Summit on clean cooking in Africa](#).

5,000

The number of [local bus services cut](#) under the Conservatives since 2010. Manchester, Liverpool and West Yorkshire are now taking control back from private companies.

£530 million

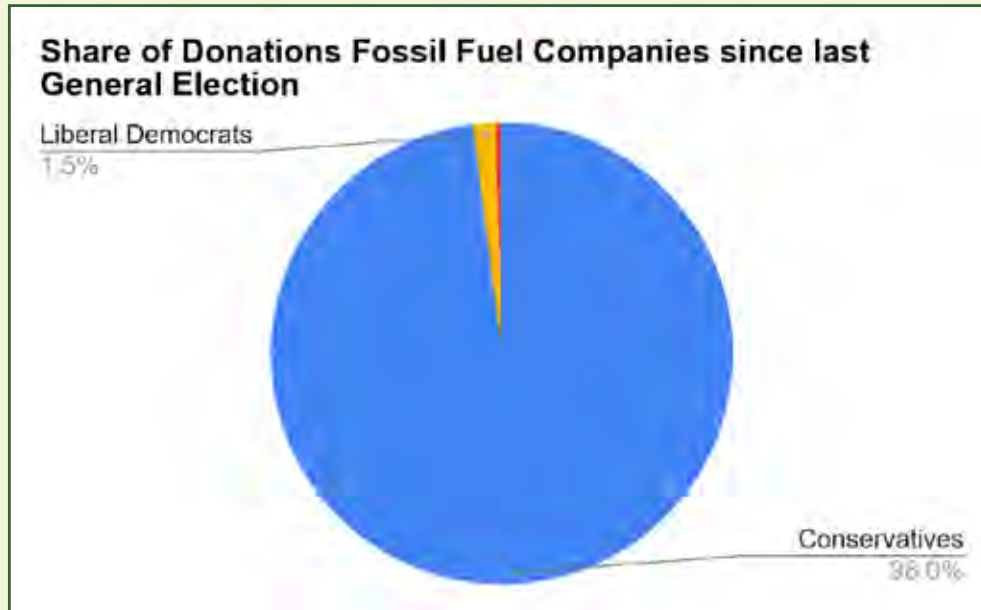
How much the [government is committing to decarbonise public buildings](#). It is estimated that getting schools alone to net zero by 2030 would cost £16.3 billion. To reach the target of a 78% reduction by 2035 would cost £2 billion a year. At present the DFE is spending £221 million (just over a tenth of the way there). This is described by the government as “*part of the government’s plan to reach its world-leading net zero targets in a sustainable, pragmatic way*” proving, once again, how far from “sustainable” their “pragmatism” is.

£795 billion

Combined wealth of the richest 350 individuals and families in the UK according to the [Sunday Times](#). An orchard of magic money trees if anyone cares to harvest it

Green Bites

Graph of the Month



The figures are: Conservatives £8.4 million, Lib Dems, £142,000, Labour £41,000. [From Desmog.](#)

Quote of the Month

“Climate change will not suddenly become dangerous at 1.5C – it already is – and it will not be ‘game over’ if we pass 2C, which we might well do. Every tenth of a degree matters.”

Prof Peter Cox - University of Exeter

New on the Debate Blog

- [Building climate literacy into skills training: the Canadian experience](#)
- [Mythbusters #3 “It’s gonna cost you?”](#)

Support our work: Could you pass this in your union branch?

Recognising the need for the trade union movement to take a lead in fighting for a just transition, and the role played by the Greener Jobs Alliance Newsletter in developing the debate on how to do this, (insert name of branch) agrees

1. to donate £100 to the GJA to help keep this work going
2. to circulate the next edition of the Newsletter online to our members with a suggestion they subscribe if interested.

Contact [gjacomsg@gmail.com](mailto:gjacoms@gmail.com) to arrange any payments. Thanks

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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