

Contents

1. Editorial
2. Election 2017 – GJA's 10 'Green' Demands
3. Unions slam government's toxic air plan
4. Global Divestment Week – May 5th to 13th
5. Selling-out our Green Investment bank
6. Union conference season – Motions on climate change and related issues
7. Guest Article: Painting our nails while the planet burns?
8. Resources

1. Ten election demands for Any Party's manifesto

The Earth has a message for politicians in this election, and so do we. Measurements taken from Hawaii's [Mauna Loa Observatory](#) show that carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere just reached concentrations not seen in three million years. Global temperatures could exceed 1.5 degrees above their pre-industrial levels within the next 15 years, according to a new scientific study, crossing the first threshold under the Paris climate agreement and placing the world at a potentially dangerous level of climate change.

<http://bit.ly/2pzSpKg>

Trump may despise science and love fake news. Theresa May can sell off our only Green Investment Bank and fake action to deal with toxic air in our cities, as we report here. But the condition of the planet doesn't lie.

Our message is equally blunt. We've issued 10 green demands for this election, for Any Party's manifesto and campaign. Building on the Climate Change Act and the UK's binding commitments to cut carbon gas emissions, we demand investment in green jobs and skills, complete with union rights at work, from making electric vehicles and fitting home insulation to renewable energy. We call on government to trust the people with new support for community energy and, yes, a real Clean Air Act that will eliminate toxic air from our towns and cities once and for all.

<http://bit.ly/2pZuBz7>



2. Election 2017– GJA’s 10 ‘Green’ Demands

The GJA Steering Group on May 3rd drew up 10 demands for political parties to address in the election on June 8th. Action on climate change should be central to all party manifestos. We hope that GJA supporters can use our 10 demands in discussions about the kind of economy and society we want to live in. Good luck with your campaign work and as always any feedback on these demands is very welcome.



Top 10 ‘Green’ Election Demands

1. Keep the Climate Change Act 2008. Stick to the UK’s legally binding commitments to cut harmful greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 as a minimum. Ensure that UK energy and industrial policy is effectively aligned with the Committee on Climate Change projections and carbon budgets.
2. Trust the people with a massive boost to energy democracy. Support a new wave of community based solar and onshore wind projects with ambitious feed-in tariffs wherever there is local support. Lift the ban on onshore wind projects. Support for local authorities to set up municipal energy supply companies.
3. Ban fracking and respect local democracy wherever fracking applications are opposed by local communities.
4. Cut energy bills and carbon emissions with a nationwide home insulation programme. ‘Retrofit’ poorly insulated homes and build new, low energy social housing, using as far as possible direct labour, and supported by high quality vocational education and training. Make ‘Energy efficiency’ a national infrastructure priority to create decent jobs, reduce fuel poverty and reduce fuel bills
5. Make education for sustainable development a core priority across the education system. Prioritise research funding that will promote the implementation of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.
6. Create a million skilled climate jobs: invest in all forms of renewable energy, low carbon jobs and skills, including electric vehicle manufacture, rail investment, and build a full supply chain to make and supply renewable energy technologies in the UK.
7. Create a new Green Investment Bank in public ownership and with full accountability. Use the green bank to support Regional Development Board investment in green energy and transport infrastructure projects.
8. Create a National Climate Service to oversee the transition to a low carbon economy. This to include a Ministry for Climate Jobs, Skills and Social Protection’ to equip the UK to a transformation of the world of work working across all Government departments and industrial sectors.
9. Introduce an Environment Protection Act to incorporate vital European directives into UK law. Commit the UK to retain membership of the European Court of Justice to ensure that our citizens have the same environmental protection rights as all EU citizens, wherever environmental standards are at risk.
10. Introduce a Clean Air Act to tackle air pollution once and for all. Place a clear legal responsibility on employers and businesses to address air quality and develop a network of low emission zones in pollution hot spots.

In the Mayoral elections in Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region the candidates were asked to sign up to a charter by UCU and UNISON in the North West. These included a recognition that ‘Skills and training are key to a number of city-region objectives: economic growth, employment, productivity, development of green skills, health and well-being.’

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/8756/Mayoral-candidates-asked-to-sign-up-to-commitments-on-education-and-skills?list=1676>

3. Unions slam government's toxic air plan

Trade unions in Wandsworth, south London, home to Europe's most polluted streets, have attacked Theresa May's new clean air strategy for failing to eliminate life-threatening pollutants from the borough's air.

Speaking for Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Union Council (BWTUC), Graham Petersen said,

"If this document represents their vision of how the public will be protected from air pollution it is no surprise they wanted to keep it under wraps. If this is how you respond to the Number 1 public health hazard then the Conservative Party have lost all credibility on this important issue. Instead of providing clear leadership from central government, control measures have largely been delegated to local authorities.

This is the same government that has stripped local government finances to the bone. A public health emergency that claims the lives of around 40,000 people every year requires a clear national direction."

People in Wandsworth are in the front-line of toxic air. We have the most polluted street in Europe – Putney High St. Levels in some parts of the borough show over twice the legal limit of 40ug/m³ for nitrogen dioxide. In April, the Wandsworth Guardian quoted a report that showed 29 schools in the borough were located in areas exceeding the safe legal limit. Wandsworth Council's own Air Quality Action Plan identified the importance of a campaign 'to national government towards a non-diesel economy' as a priority action. If they are serious about this then the Council should join us in condemning these inadequate proposals.

BWTUC believes that new statutory duties are required under a Clean Air Act that provides a national plan covering low emission zones, clean energy public transport provision, and duties on manufacturers and employers.

Currently businesses pay a fraction of what it costs the NHS to treat victims of toxic air. Yet it is employers that are the root cause of diesel emissions from their transport fleet as well as the individual work journeys to and from work made by their staff.

That is why BWTUC believe that air quality is a workplace issue. It is also why we provide funding for awareness raising initiatives like the GJA training modules on Air Quality which will be launched at the end of the month.

It is clearly now a political issue in this election. The Government have shown they have no effective strategy. This is not strong leadership, it is passing the buck, and relying on a voluntary approach that will not deliver on the scale required.

For full article and notes plus PDF visit:
http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/?page_id=642

4. Global Divestment Week – May 5th - 13th



In the UK, dozens of events will be taking place calling on local government, faith, health, cultural institutions, politicians and banks to divest from fossil fuels.

Across the week, Town Halls will be pressured to divest their Local Government Pension Funds from fossil fuels shreholdings, with events including a giant map linking climate impacts to families in Birmingham, a 'Renewables Ark' in Bradford highlighting local flood risk, and a series of 14 rolling rallies across London's Town Halls.

Faith based organisers will be calling on the Church of England to fully divest with a 'Marriage of Inconvenience' sketch outside Church House, and young Muslims will be discussing faith and divestment at a London film screening.

Doctors are arranging film screenings of the short 'Fossil Free Health' film to highlight the health impacts of fossil fuels and climate change, and calling on Royal Colleges to divest, including a motion to the Royal College of Nursing Congress on the 15th May.

Demonstrations including frontline communities affected both by fracking and the Dakota Access Pipeline will happen outside the Barclays AGM on 10th May, with shareholders asking questions about their investments in controversial fossil fuel projects and demonstrations at bank branches around the country.

The week will culminate with a creative action at the British Museum highlighting the huge government subsidies enjoyed by fossil fuel companies, and calling for an end to fossil fuel sponsorship at the museum.

Parliamentary candidates will be invited to support divestment, and there'll be an online event hosted by Ethical Consumer on positive reinvestment.

Storytelling blogs here:
<http://bit.ly/2pzyzPj>

<http://bit.ly/2qrRmQC>

Link to the Media Pack here:
<http://bit.ly/2qTiGXz>

5. Selling-out our Green Investment bank

The TUC has criticised the government's 'shameful' decision to sell off the publicly owned Green Investment Bank (GIB), which successfully backed over £10 billion of new investment in green projects across the UK.

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/economic-issues/industrial-issues/energy/social-issues/green-investment-bank-sale-missed-opportunity>

TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady said: "The sale is a missed opportunity to create the green economy we need, and to catch up with our competitors. It's a shame that such a successful public investment bank with a genuine green purpose will no longer be boosting the public purse, but lining corporate pockets instead."



Macquarie, the buyer, is an Australian asset management fund. Macquarie's successful bid for the National Grid's distribution business last December met with dismay by public services union UNISON.

<https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2016/12/macquarie-wins-uk-gas-supply-business-despite-previous-failings-in-water-supply-says-unison/>

The union – which has thousands of members working in the utilities sector – said when Macquarie ran Thames Water, the end result was poorer customer service, higher bills, massive debts, complex tax structures and profits siphoned off to its parent company in Australia. UNISON fears a similar fate lies in store for the UK's network of gas pipelines and the country's consumers more generally. In one year alone in 2013, despite achieving a turnover of £1.8 billion and profits of £550 million it paid no corporation tax at all.

The GIB has committed £2.3bn of public funds to support 58 green infrastructure projects, with a total value of £10.1bn. So every £1 we committed mobilised £3 of private investment.

www.greeninvestmentbank.com/news-and-insights/2015/uk-green-investment-bank-helps-mobilise-10bn-of-capital-into-uk-green-infrastructure/

6. Union conference season – Motions on climate change and related issues



PCS – The 'Becoming a Greener Union' Annual Report, 2017 will be presented at the annual conference on May 23rd-25th. It sets out what the union is doing as an employer and in the workplaces where members are employed. Campaign updates are included. All in all an impressive illustration of what a union can do. We will provide a report of the conference in the June newsletter.

http://www.pcs.org.uk/sites/default/files/site_assets/conference/2017/ADC%20Greener%20Union%20Report%202017.pdf



UCU – Annual Congress is taking place on May 27th-29th. The GJA will be launching the new Air Quality training modules at the conference. Four climate change related motions are up for discussion. [Find them here.](#)



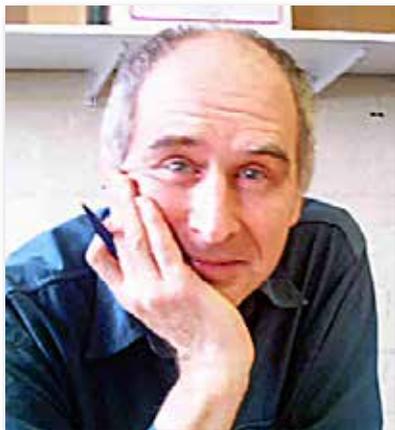
NUS – The NUS conference took place at the end of April. A motion was passed on climate change. Go to

<http://sustainability.nus.org.uk/articles/national-conference-passes-motion-to-fight-climate-change>

Don't forget to send us your conference motions on energy, climate change and the environment.

7. Guest Article: Painting our nails while the planet burns?

Our guest contributor, Paul Atkin, (London Region NUT), writing in a personal capacity:



The NUT executive is considering meetings with opposition parties to develop a shared vision for education for the 21st century, to set against the Conservative's nostalgic view that all will be well if we do things like we did in the 1950s. This is a timely proposal and needs to have a strategic vision at its heart.

In *The Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci argues that every society reproduces itself through its education system up to the cultural and technical level it requires. An education system generates skills, but it also helps shape the narratives that people live by. Today, some of these skills are redundant, or of secondary significance, and many of the narratives are misleading. It's because the education framework for citizens of the future is determined by the social structures and imperatives of the past.

In the UK today, this is shown in the stark contradiction between the education that we need for an environmentally sustainable future society and the education that we have now, designed to replicate a social and economic order of the past. The imperative for this is global. Without more drastic action than is currently planned, we are heading for a global temperature rise that will be beyond anything experienced since the dawn of human civilisation.

Current government education policy does not rise to this challenge. Nor does its policy in any other area. If we are to create a sustainable zero carbon economy, we can't go on as we are. There is a need for profound changes in the way we eat, travel, generate and save energy, how and where we live. A viable future will not be just like now but with electric cars.

Current government initiatives are designed for a future in which we continue to allow the imperatives of private control of wealth to trump social needs. This is both undesirable and unsustainable.

Undesirable, because it helps create a future in which the mass of the population face insecure, short term, poorly paid, casualised "gig economy jobs", requiring relatively little academic achievement or vocational skill. So school funding can safely be cut because nothing more will be required from most people. This is not a good future. I was told recently by one of my local councillors that most of the apprenticeships currently on offer in Brent are for beauticians and hairdressers. So we are painting our nails while the planet burns.

Unsustainable, because we need people trained to install solar panels and wind farms, maintain them and improve their design. We need people skilled and equipped to retrofit our old leaky buildings so they are carbon neutral. We need people who can design and build millions of homes that are zero carbon and plan integrated communities and transport systems that minimise energy use and generate mutual social support - and that's just for starters*.

Above all, we need teachers who understand these developments, and a curriculum that allows our children to appreciate what we are doing to our planet, growing the skills we need to save ourselves. It is no accident that climate change issues have been squeezed into the margins by this government. This is on the same lines as President Trump's removal of funding from the NASA satellites that gather the data on what is actually happening to the planet and tell a story he doesn't want us to know. Sadly, what you don't know can hurt you.

Equally, we need a sharp shift in values and teaching styles away from one promoting a competitive "individual exam candidate" model to one emphasising problem solving and co-operation, capable of producing an articulate, socially aware generation with the wit to challenge and change things by working together.

The current delusion of "social mobility", that the greatest "aspiration" we could have is to be able to live and be like Sir Philip Green or Donald Trump is worthless. As though the point of life is to "move up," not to make a contribution, to grab not to share. A recent survey of the very wealthy showed that only 3% of them thought that making a social contribution is a worthwhile thing. An education for a sustainable society will need to turn that on its head. The contribution you can make, becoming a social being not just a consumer, is the highest value. And as Sun Tsu so rightly said, "in the absence of a strategy, arguments about tactics are the noise before defeat" and humanity can't afford for us to lose this one.

*See [One Million Climate Jobs](#) for a fuller exploration of this or have a look at the [Greener Jobs Alliance website](#).

8. Resources

The GJA aims to publish and also reference materials that can be used to promote a low carbon economy. Below is some information about a UN funded body, *Partnership for Action on Green Economy* (PAGE), launched in 2013 at Rio+20 in response to the call to support those countries wishing to embark on greener and more inclusive growth trajectories.



PAGE seeks to put sustainability at the heart of economic policies and practices to advance the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). It supports nations and regions in reframing economic policies and practices around sustainability to foster economic growth, create income and jobs, reduce poverty and inequality, and strengthen the ecological foundations of their economies.

PAGE brings together five UN agencies – UN Environment, International Labour Organization, UN Development Programme, UN Industrial Development Organization, and UN Institute for Training and Research.

Introductory and Advanced learning resources can be accessed here:

<http://un-page.org/learning-resources/learning-materials-inclusive-green-economy>

Linked Documents

SFC13 Just Transition UCU Scotland Executive Committee

Congress notes and welcomes the agreement of a joint statement between UCU Scotland, the STUC, UNITE, UNISON, PCS, CWU, WWF Scotland, and Friends of the Earth Scotland in support of a Just Transition towards a low-carbon economy which protects the livelihoods of workers in industries affected by the transition. Congress notes the work of UCU members in bringing the statement together; supports a Just Transition; and resolves to work with members affected by a move to a low carbon economy, other trade unions, and environmentalists to ensure that the change from a fossil fuel to low carbon economy is one which is fair and just to all workers employed in those sectors affected.

SFC14 Composite: Climate Change, Jobs and Airport Expansion London Regional Committee, London Retired Members branch

We call upon UCU to move the following motion at TUC congress:

To halt climate change we need to leave most of the reserves of carbon fuels in the ground. We need workers to insulate homes and buildings to conserve energy. Workers to build enough renewable power to meet all our energy needs. Workers to maintain the new systems the future of humanity depends on.

The conversion to a sustainable energy policy will provide millions of jobs world-wide as the pamphlet “One Million Climate Jobs” demonstrates.

We campaign therefore for:

1. energy democracy and a rapid transition from fossil fuels;
2. stop all airport expansion;
3. government funding for green jobs training;
4. no fracking;
5. promote alternatives to short-haul flights, including publicly owned rail services;
6. a genuine commitment to reducing lethal air pollutants;
7. a just transition employment strategy to climate jobs and well-paid, skilled, sustainable employment;
8. support for improved links between anti-war, refugee and climate campaign movements;
9. action against TTIP, CETA and other trade treaties threatening climate justice;
10. a Climate Justice Fund funded by wealthy nations and polluting companies.

SFC15 Air quality South Thames College

Air pollution in the UK is a public health emergency. Over 40,000 people die each year from the air that they breathe – more than obesity and alcohol combined. A significant cause is carbon pollution arising from work and travel to work. It is an occupational health issue that employers take little responsibility for.

In the FHE sector many workplaces are in high pollution areas. Recent research shows that 43% of colleges in London are in locations that breach legal standards. Congress calls on UCU to:

1. Campaign for a legal framework that addresses this health emergency;
2. Promotes a programme of awareness raising for staff and students in the sector;
3. Provide training and support for UCU Environment and Health and Safety Reps to tackle this issue in their workplace and communities;
4. Work with the Greener Jobs Alliance, the Hazards Campaign and other organisations promoting air quality action to deliver these objectives.

Mauna Loa Observatory

The program at Mauna Loa Observatory is run jointly by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, which means that the program is vulnerable, at least in part, to the whims of federal funding. And while the Scripps Institute of Oceanography is a private institution, it has also received funds from the Department of Energy. It's unclear whether funding for the program will continue under the Trump administration—Trump's proposed skinny budget cuts much of NOAA's research funding and cuts almost all domestic climate research funding.

<https://thinkprogress.org/410-ppm-carbon-dioxide-atmosphere-71aa17fef076>

[Back to Editorial](#)