

Contents

1. Editorial: Get in touch with the zeitgeist
2. Unions, Just Transition and Climate Action
3. Social Power or Social Dialogue?
4. Air Pollution: UK in the dock, GJA in the workplace
5. Government apprenticeship plans way off track
6. Dramatic fall in green energy investment
7. Fracking: block around the clock
8. Events and jobs
9. GDPR privacy statement

1. Get in touch with the zeitgeist

When it comes to tackling the climate crisis, the Conservatives are well out of step with the general public. <https://capx.co/on-renewables-ministers-are-ignoring-the-public-and-the-evidence/> Onshore wind and solar power projects, starved of government backing, command huge public support (over 87% in one poll). The result? Green investment here has *'plummeted to its lowest level for ten years.'*

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/617/61703.htm>



But are trade unions also out of touch with the zeitgeist? The main barrier to trade union involvement in 'long term decarbonisation strategies' doesn't seem to be obstruction by government or employers (although there is plenty of that). The main challenges, according to a new ETUC study, seem to lie within trade unions themselves, in the lack of priority, dedicated resources and staff. Sure, there are powerful examples from across Europe of unions mobilising for a just transition (the Yorkshire Low Carbon Task Force is a case in point).

Yet the *'transition to a low carbon economy will profoundly reshape the labour market,'* says the ETUC, creating risks, and job gains as well as losses. On balance, the UK's 'green economy' is growing more rapidly than any other sector <https://bit.ly/2L30SzE>. A new drive by trade unions urging on government action to tackle the climate crisis will not only help build a just transition, but reflect the public mood, and offer new membership opportunities, too.



2. Unions, Just Transition and Climate Action

A new European trade union guide <https://bit.ly/2Jh9JRh> urges unions to 'get involved with their governments in climate action plans to build a just transition.' It's frank about the worrying 'lack of priority' shown by some unions. But the study offers a range of trade union-led 'just transition' case studies at the workplace, across industry and with national governments.

Launched in Brussels 16 May, the European TUC (ETUC) guide is accompanied by a video claiming a touch optimistically that, 'with an international deal on climate change, our green train is on track.'
<https://bit.ly/2JghbvT>

Nevertheless, the report makes a frank assessment of union strengths and weaknesses, and offers a five-part strategy for a just transition:

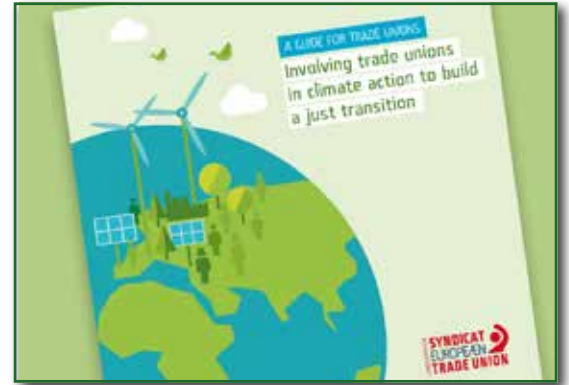


Tackling climate change must bring quality jobs, union rights, skills and training, and alternatives for workers on the frontline of change. For any job at risk there has to be a future - not just coal miners and in power stations, but in the heavy industries like steel and cement manufacture which use masses of energy in production.

A clear warning that 'no worker shall be left behind' came from Luke Triangle, head of the European unions' heavy industry committee (IndustriALL). Speaking in Brussels he said, 'We have to answer the Polish miners' question: What do you have in mind for us for the future?'

And that, perhaps, is the toughest challenge for unions across Europe, with widespread concerns that a European Commission wedded to a neoliberal agenda is failing Europe's working class. A speaker for the European Commission, Sami Andoura, said, 'All too often, although Europe is a leader on climate change, we set a goal and leave it to the market to deliver. But the markets has its limits... solidarity between governments, civil society and business will help reset that balance.' But as one delegate said, 'Social partnership should be normal, we shouldn't have to battle for it at every turn... too often the Commission is not open to dialogue with labour unions.'

The report showcases some 20 union-led initiatives. The Yorkshire Low Carbon Task Force <https://bit.ly/2J1IUU9> gets credit for building a new alliance of unions, employers, green organisations and local enterprise agencies. Its focus is the region's



energy intensive and power industries. Bill Adam's the TUC regional secretary, argues that 'the main priority is to build from the workplace upwards.' The Greener Jobs Alliance is supporting the task force with a new environmental reps training programme.

Biggest carbon emitters in Yorkshire



Can unions recruit in the new green industries? The report also offers a refreshing challenge to the sceptical claim by some unions that the renewables revolution has 'promised a lot' but has failed to deliver. The ETUC guide reports an IG Metall unionisation campaign in the renewables sector, which established 20 works councils, 1,500 new members and 150 shop stewards in the renewables industry. 'Trade union membership developed in companies that were previously closed to trade unions, such as the wind energy leader, Enercon.'

Meanwhile, in Hull, Unite <https://bit.ly/2LAtLVe> says the country's wind power industry has been 'blown back on course' thanks to Siemens' £160 million investment in wind turbine production and installation facilities in Hull, where the union is developing a strong membership agreement.

Are unions mobilising?

About three quarters of European trade unions claim to be involved in some way in their government's long-term climate change strategies. The most effective work seems to be at sector level with industry and government. But the ETUC's report is under no illusions about the weaknesses of social dialogue: not for want of trying do majorities of trade unions say their arguments aren't taken fully into account.

And the report realistically shows that the three biggest obstacles to unions mobilising for climate action are still to be found within unions themselves:

- Lack of priority.
- Lack of human resources.
- Lack of financial capacity.

So, for the ETUC, Benjamin Denis signalled five priorities for trade unions:

- Make climate action a policy priority at the highest union levels.
- Bring new resources to bear, in training, advice and recruitment.
- Join broader alliances, work together.
- Organise and promote union membership.
- Develop and strengthen networks of green shop stewards and green workplaces.

The GJA welcomes this guide as a new boost to Just Transition campaigning. We'll back it with our national policy statement, online training, newsletters and public events at trade union and Party conferences.

3. Social Power or Social Dialogue?



Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) has published a new Working Paper on 'Trade Unions and Just Transition' <https://bit.ly/2IRVv5W> challenging the 'orthodox' approach to Just Transition. To tackle the worsening climate crisis, TUED advocates a deeper transformation of society based on a 'Social Power' approach, as an alternative to the 'ill-equipped' model of Just Transition based on 'Social Dialogue' supported by the ETUC, the International TUC and many unions. Individuals in the GJA have differences with some of the TUED analysis of Just Transition.

The TUED paper aims to promote discussions around just transition. It is therefore very timely and contains some good analysis of the historical context and current issues. It should be read alongside the European TUC publication referenced at the beginning of this newsletter. We will be publishing our comments as a contribution to the vital debate that needs to take place. We urge you to read the TUED publication and feed in your views to us.

4. Air Pollution: UK in the dock, GJA in the workplace

On 17 May, the European Commission announced it would refer six EU countries, including the UK, to the Court of Justice of the European Union for their prolonged failure to address air pollution.

Reacting to the announcement, ClientEarth lawyer Ugo Taddei said: "We are glad that, at last, the Commission is taking serious steps to fight air pollution before the Court of Justice. But it shouldn't have taken so long. Air pollution requires urgent action and it's been clear for too many years that authorities across Europe are failing to protect their people from illegal and harmful levels of air pollution. <https://bit.ly/2JaPyo1>

As a public health emergency, air pollution training for union reps continues to form a significant part of GJA activity at national, regional and local level.

Nationally, the GJA will be presenting our air pollution guidance at the GMB conference in Brighton and the UCU conference in Manchester. <https://bit.ly/2JhjYVw>

We will also be running a workshop at the National Hazards Conference in July. <https://bit.ly/2GVubly>

Regionally we are continuing our series of joint training courses with Hazards. The next set of courses will be held in Southampton on 28 September, and Birmingham on 19 October. Both these cities figure highly on the list of most polluted areas in the UK. Course details can be found [here](#).

In Tooting, SW London, we have been working with community groups and BWTUC - the local trades union council - to highlight the need for this to be recognised as a workplace issue. An election hustling was organised just before the council elections to quiz parties on their response to this and other environmental issues. We have carried out monitoring of pollution hot spots and are setting up testing of exposure levels of bus drivers. Finally, we have got the local council to agree to a meeting where we can highlight our concerns about the inadequacy of response measures.

At international level new data published on 2 May by the World Health Organisation (WHO), covering air pollution in 4,300 cities, found that nine out of ten people globally are breathing polluted air. The WHO defines this as exposure to small airborne particulate matter of 2.5 µm or less in diameter [PM2.5] <https://www.thelancet.com/climate-and-health>

The 2015 Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change, emphasised that the response to climate change could be "the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century." See Turning climate change legislation into public health policy: <https://bit.ly/2L25bLJ>

5. Government Apprenticeships Plans way off target

The GJA has highlighted in the past the failure of successive governments to address the skills gap. The government's current industrial and clean growth strategies all place great emphasis on the importance of a skilled labour force. The problem is that attempts to address it have not delivered.

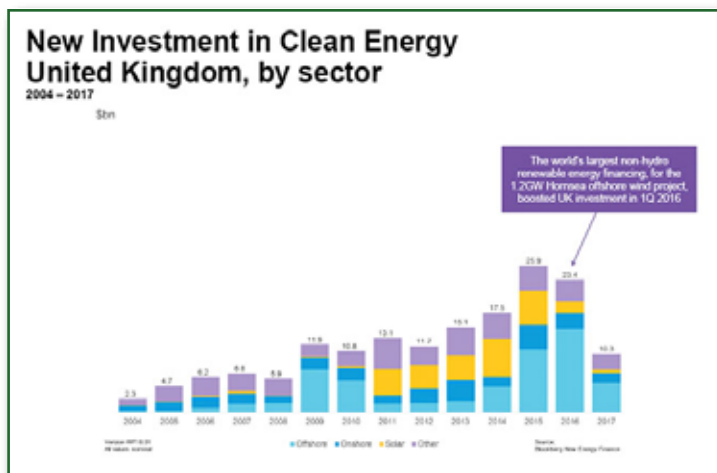
New figures from the Department for Education released in May 2018 reveal that the number of apprenticeship starts have fallen significantly, once again. In February 2018 there were 21,800 apprenticeship starts, compared to 36,400 starts in February 2017, a staggering 40% reduction. The target of 3 million apprenticeships by 2021 looks increasingly unachievable unless there is a radical shift in policy <https://bit.ly/2sjB36W>

The GJA will be outlining a future policy framework at a roundtable organised by SERA at the Labour Party conference in September. We are teaming up with the NUS and others to explore options on how to get the skills agenda back on track.

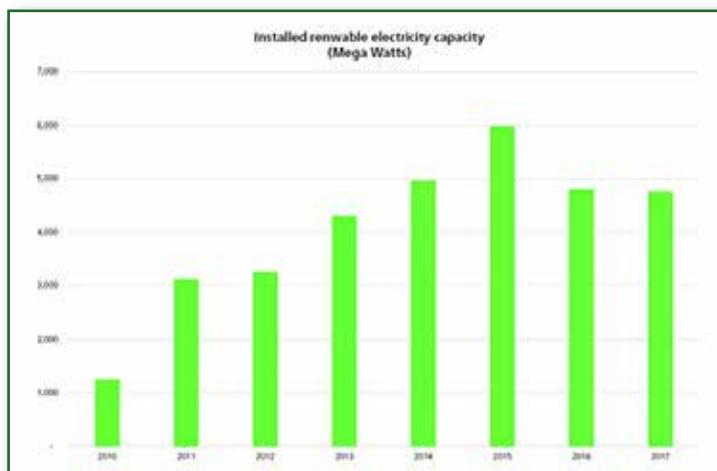
6. 'Dramatic fall' in green energy investment

UK's annual clean energy investment, now the lowest since 2008. The rate at which we are installing new renewable capacity is slowing. A critical report <https://bit.ly/2xIkMnB> from calls on Ministers to 'urgently plug the policy gaps with a delivery plan for the investment needed to meet the UK's carbon targets.'

Clean energy investment has fallen dramatically since 2015. In cash terms it fell by 10% in 2016 and by a further 56% in 2017:



The UK will need to mobilise large volumes of capital investment in clean energy and sustainable infrastructure if we are to meet our obligations under 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement. Yet the trend is downward:



Why this investment collapse? MPs blame 'sudden changes to low-carbon energy policies in 2015 undermined investor confidence.' During autumn 2015, the then Government:

- Blocked funding for onshore wind projects, the cheapest renewable energy.
- Imposed a carbon price (the Climate Change Levy) on renewables.
- reduced Feed-In-Tariffs for small scale renewable generation.
- cancelled the Zero Carbon Homes policy due to come into force in 2016.
- cancelled the £1 billion Carbon Capture & Storage competition.

Disruption from the privatisation of the Green Investment Bank and a reduction in European Investment Bank lending following the vote to leave the EU also played a part. And in the Autumn 2017 Budget, a few weeks after the government's Clean Growth Strategy <https://bit.ly/2yiDY3R> was published, the Chancellor announced a moratorium on financial support mechanisms for new low-carbon energy projects.

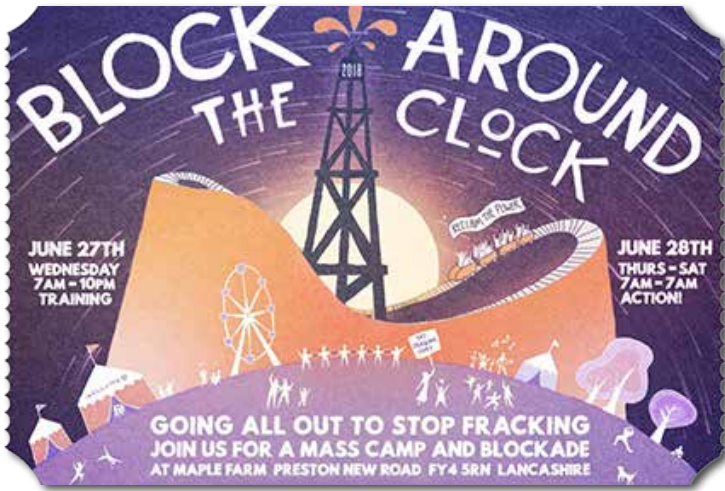
MPs reckon that meeting our carbon budgets up to 2032 will require investment of up to £22 billion a year, or 1% of GDP. The government says the Clean Growth Strategy will mobilise industry to deliver our climate change commitments. The harsh reality is that George Osborne's austerity cuts have driven us off course. The strategy will remain aspirational without the billions in public-led investment needed for homes insulation, electric vehicle manufacture, renewable energy investment, and in the new technologies for our energy intensive industries.

Prospect, the only union that seems to have commented, said, 'A new financing model is needed, with government taking a direct stake in new projects like the Swansea tidal lagoon and new nuclear power stations to bring down costs.'

<https://bit.ly/2GYJh9I>

7. Fracking: Block around the clock

As the government signals a relaxation in the planning laws which apply to fracking for shale, Reclaim the Power are calling a mass camp and blockade at Cuadrilla's Preston New Road site over the weekend of 30 June www.reclaimthepower.org.uk



Under the government's plans, preliminary drilling could be classed as permitted development - the same law that allows people to build a small conservatory. The Financial Times says the government has been accused of *'trampling over democracy'*, adding: *'The government is to consult on whether seismic surveys and test drilling should be treated as "permitted development", removing the need for planning approval.'*

Energy minister Claire Perry MP announced <https://bit.ly/2wNkNk3> these proposals as part of a package of measures to 'streamline' development of UK shale resources. The [Daily Telegraph](#) says *'fracking could become as easy as building an extension'*.

The government also announced a consultation in summer 2018, on the principle of whether non-hydraulic fracturing shale exploration development should be treated as permitted development.

Claire Perry added: *'We strongly believe that communities hosting shale gas developments should share in the financial returns they generate. The Government welcomes the shale gas companies' commitment to make set payments to these communities, which could be worth up to £10m for a typical site. Actions to support local communities are an important complement to the planning actions set out above.'*

Meanwhile, in the Sussex Weald, a new crowd funding appeal seeks to overturn an oil company injunction against 'persons unknown' combining in peaceful protest <https://bit.ly/2HeOUWz>

The sweeping injunction sought by UKOG aims to prohibit a wide range of actions that may interfere with the fracking company's 'economic interests'.

8. Events and jobs

What kind of green and just transition?

A workshop organised by The University of Westminster
Thursday 12 July 2018 12.00 - 18.00
Venue: Room CG28,
University of Westminster Marylebone Campus 35
Marylebone Road
London NW1 5LS
(opposite Madame Tussaud and diagonal from Baker Street tube station)

To reserve a place and for further information, contact:

Melihat Sahin-Dikmen:
M.Sahindikmen@westminster.ac.uk or
Linda Clarke:
clarkel@westminster.ac.uk

There is much discussion as well as divergent approaches to the question of a just transition to a low carbon economy, revolving around what is achievable by the market or by ecological modernisation and whether instead a much more radical transformation is necessary. This workshop addresses this debate and is concerned, in particular, with the active role of workers and the trade unions in this transition, including examples from the built environment of successful intervention.

Job opportunity in fossil fuel divestment



350.org are hiring a Senior UK Campaigner.

350.org is looking for an experienced, collaborative, and strategic campaigner and manager to lead their UK work, including the development and implementation of the revamped Fossil Free campaign.

Deadline 9.00am, 11 June. Join the team!

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/FossilFreeUK/posts/882155235305319>

Twitter:
https://twitter.com/FossilFree_UK/status/997489743272214528

8. GDPR privacy statement

Dear Greener Jobs Alliance supporter:

You will no doubt be aware of the new General Data Protection Regulation, which came into force recently. We at the Greener Jobs Alliance take your privacy seriously.

You are receiving these email updates because you agreed to receive updates and news from the Greener Jobs Alliance. The information that the Greener Jobs Alliance holds about you is your name and email address. We do not share this information with external organisations and we do not sell any products.

In order to enhance your control over whether or not to continue to receive updates from the Greener Jobs Alliance, we are planning to move our email list to a **Google Groups** email distribution list. The effect of this is that you can continue to receive updates and newsletters as you do at present, but you will also be more easily able to more directly manage your subscription, including leaving the list, should you wish. We hope you will continue to subscribe to our updates, of course!

Please look out for further notifications of our migration to Google Groups.

Air pollution – A Trade Union issue

Friday, September 28th, 2018 from 1.00pm – 4.00pm

Air pollution in the UK is a public health emergency. Over 40,000 people die each year from causes linked to the air that they breathe – more than obesity and alcohol combined.

Workers are exposed to and create pollution to fulfil contractual obligations to employers. It is an occupational health issue that employers take little responsibility for.

Attending this course will help you to:

- Examine why air pollution is both a workplace issue and a public health one
- Find out about air pollution busting Citizen Science techniques
- Create action plans to deal with workplace exposures
- Create action plans to meaningfully engage in air pollution with local councils
- Share experience, knowledge and ideas

Lunch
provided

South East Region Southampton Office
Unite the Union
Unite House
41 Castle Way
Southampton SO14 2BW.

Registration is required.
Please confirm your attendance by email to:
janet@gmhzards.org.uk

For further information please contact Janet
Newsham on Tel 0161 6367558



Air pollution – A Trade Union issue

Friday, October 19th, 2018 from 1.00pm – 4.00pm

Air pollution in the UK is a public health emergency. Over 40,000 people die each year from causes linked to the air that they breathe – more than obesity and alcohol combined.

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- Share experience, knowledge and ideas

Lunch
provided

University and College Union
3rd Floor, Alpha Tower
Suffolk Street Queensway
Birmingham
B1 1TT

Registration is required.
Please confirm your attendance by email to:
janet@gmhzards.org.uk

For further information please contact Janet
Newsham on Tel 0161 6367558



[Back to newsletter](#)