

## Briefing: Global Climate Strikes, 20th September 2019

### Climate Strike Asks ([more info](#)):

1. **Save the future** - the Government declare a climate emergency and implement a [Green New Deal](#) to achieve Climate Justice.
  - a) Totally decarbonise the UK economy through a government-led, ten year mobilisation for a just and prosperous transition including the infrastructure needed to benefit all communities and workers.
  - b) Create millions of new, well-paid and secure jobs ensuring sustainable and meaningful livelihoods for all workers, including those in today's high emissions sectors.
  - c) Massively reduce social and economic inequalities with investment targeted in communities where it is most needed in the UK as a result of historic and current oppression, and the green economy that emerges will operate equitably and work in the interest of these communities.
  - d) Protect and restore vital threatened habitats and carbon sinks, and ensure the provision of clean water, clean air and green spaces, securing a safe and healthy environment for all.
  - e) Build a resilient society prepared for the impacts of climate change that are now unavoidable, readying ourselves in unity to meet these challenges in ways that protect the most vulnerable, including: deindustrialised communities, the global south, deprived rural communities, communities of colour, migrant communities, low-income workers, women, the elderly, the homeless, people with disabilities and young people.
2. **Teach the future** - the national curriculum is reformed to address the ecological crisis as an educational priority.
3. **Tell the future** - the Government communicate the severity of the ecological crisis and the necessity to act now to the general public.
4. **Empower the future** - the Government recognise that young people have the biggest stake in our future, by incorporating youth views into policy making and bringing the voting age down to 16.

### Briefing

#### 1. Implementing a Green New Deal

- The UK has adopted a world-leading net zero target and will end our contributions to climate change altogether by 2050. This in line with the scientific expert advice from the independent Committee on Climate Change. A 2050 target doesn't rule out achieving it earlier. The CCC stated that reaching net zero by 2050 will now cost the same as they expected reaching an 80% reduction to cost in 2008, due to innovation and cost reductions.
- However, it's important to set a realistic and achievable target as it is a legally-binding framework. We now need to get on with the policies needed to reach net zero - supporting renewables, decarbonising transport and agriculture etc.
- The Clean Growth Strategy has supported the growth of the [low carbon economy](#) at two to three times the rate of the regular mainstream economy. There are now more than 390,000 jobs in low-carbon businesses and their supply chains, employing people across the UK. The UK's low-carbon and renewable-energy economy was worth £43bn in 2016. It's right that we should be training up the workforce of the future, and I will continue to support this, especially with STEM apprenticeships which will be vital as we transform our energy system and build smarter infrastructure.

- A net zero economy offers opportunities for communities up and down the country. From the engineers building wind turbine blades in Hull's state of the art factory, to the production line staff manufacturing electric cars in Sunderland, to the coastal communities in Kent reborn thanks to the offshore wind boom – British people are making our country a world leader in clean growth. We must make sure that this transition benefits everyone across the UK.
- Many of the aspects of a net zero economy will benefit people directly - for example by making their bills cheaper & keeping their homes warmer with smart renewable power & efficiency technologies.
- As climate change makes extreme weather more likely and more intense - including droughts and flooding - these events are most likely to hit the world's poorest the hardest. That's why we must play our part to tackle it. The Government set up the International Climate Fund (ICF) to help the world's poorest adapt to climate change and promote cleaner, greener economic growth. Since 2011, the ICF has provided access to low carbon energy to more than 2.6 million people. The funding for the ICF has recently been raised to £5.8 billion, and is used to reduce carbon emissions, help people adapt to the effects of climate change and reduce deforestation.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan and the draft of the shortly expected Environment Bill set out the Government's plans to leave the environment in a better state than we found it. That includes setting legally binding targets for cleaner air and water, reducing our waste and restoring nature. I've been campaigning with CEN in Parliament for this Bill to be introduced as soon as possible.
- We also support the Government's pledge to plant 11 million trees by 2022 - we hope this will be increased in line with the Committee on Climate Change's advice for net zero - but these trees will need to be the right kind in the right places to have the necessary benefits for nature & climate.
- We also support the Government's work to introduce Nature Recovery Networks and the Biodiversity Net Gain principle in the Environment Bill - the networks will create local plans of the habitats that need protecting, & net gain will ensure all new developments enhance nature.
- The UK was asked by the UN Secretary General to lead on the [climate resilience](#) aspect of the upcoming international Climate Summit (2019). This forms part of our wider work using UK Aid to improve resilience in developing countries. At home, we must be prepared for the impacts of climate change, including the increased likelihood of floods. The Environment Agency has been working on these preparations. *See the Chair of the EA's speech on a 'climate resilient economy' [here](#).*

## 2. Teaching & curriculum

- Climate change is part of the geography and science [curriculum](#) in England at Key Stage 3 and 4.
- Ultimately, it is up to schools to find the specific parts of their curriculum to explore important matters such as the environment and climate change, and teachers can already find opportunities to do so in subjects such as science, geography and citizenship education.
- Teachers across the UK are also signing up in their hundreds to become UN accredited climate change teachers at their schools. [Dr Meryl Batchelder](#), a science teacher at Corbridge Middle School in Northumberland was one of the first to complete the course.

## 3. Telling the truth

- We fully accept the scale of the challenge in tackling climate change - that's why Parliament declared a climate and ecological emergency. There was no vote because support for this was unanimous.
- The UK was one of the first countries in the world to adopt a net zero emissions target, reflecting the importance we place on this issue.

- I'm proud of the UK's world-leading role in tackling climate change and the transition to Clean Growth, with the UK being the first country to introduce legally binding long-term emissions targets under the landmark Climate Change Act in 2008.
- Since 1990, the UK has cut emissions by more than 40% while growing the economy by more than two thirds, the best performance on a per person basis than any other G7 nation.
- The UK will be hosting COP26 in Glasgow in 2020 - where we will lead the world into the next stage of the Paris Agreement, and champion further climate action.
- I've also been working with CEN to call for greater action on climate change with backbench colleagues - including in the CEN Manifesto.

#### 4. Votes at 16

- In the UK, there is no single moment when someone moves from childhood to adulthood; instead responsibilities and permitted activities build up over time. For example, a person must be 17 before they can leave home without parents' consent or hold a license to drive and 18 before they can sit on a jury or buy alcohol. This illustrates that attaining adulthood is a process rather than a single event.
- Most democracies consider 18 the right age to enfranchise young people. So far in the EU, only Austria and Scotland have lowered the voting age to 16 for national elections.
- Young people should be encouraged to take part in politics, but that is not only through voting. I often meet young people in their schools, or host work experience pupils who tell me about their views. Young people are always welcome to write to me or come to my surgeries to share their views.

#### On missing school:

- Young people are rightly concerned about this and those concerns should be taken seriously. I want young people to be engaged in key issues affecting them and involving themselves in causes they care about, but missing school is not the solution. I don't want teachers being burdened with the extra and unnecessary workload associated with preparing additional lessons or ensuring students are caught up.
- However, students should not be expelled for striking, but they should continue to be encouraged to protest outside of school hours instead. I'm always happy to meet school strikers after school with a parent or responsible adult. I also regularly visit schools in my constituency to talk to them about political issues including climate change.

#### Conservative Achievements/Announcements on the Environment

Many of you mentioned that strikers often asked about broader issues - here is a general list of achievements that show the Conservative record on conservation and decarbonisation, that may be helpful.

#### Animal Welfare

- Ongoing - Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund - invested a total of £23 million ([link](#))
- Ongoing - Banning the sale of primate pets ([link](#))
- Ongoing/potential - Finn's Law Part 2 - increasing the maximum sentence for animal cruelty from 6 months to 5 years (Sir Oliver Heald leads campaign)
- 2019 - UK leadership influences CITES ban on live elephant exports ([link](#))
- 2019 - Finn's Law - protecting our brave service animals by making it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to a service animal ([link](#))

- 2019 - Banning wild animals in circuses ([link](#))
- 2018 - Hosted international Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference in London ([link](#))
- 2018 - Banning ivory sales ([link](#))
- 2018 - Providing £6 million to protect iconic and endangered species around the world ([link](#))
- 2018 - Banning third-party sales of puppies and kittens and use of electric shock collars ([link](#))
- 2018 - Setting the ambition to reduce the number of elephants killed for ivory by at least a third by 2020 ([link](#))
- 2018 - Reintroduced beavers to the wild as part of a pioneering natural flood management scheme ([link](#))
- 2018 - Creating 500,000 hectares of new habitat for endangered species ([link](#))
- 2018 - Launched a new fund to protect bees ([link](#))
- 2017 - Introduced tougher sentences for those who abuse animals ([link](#))
- 2017 - Recognised that animals are sentient beings in primary legislation ([link](#))
- 2017 - Introduced mandatory CCTV into slaughterhouses ([link](#))

### **Oceans**

- Ongoing - Announced review into HPMA's (Highly Protected Marine Areas) ([link](#))
- Ongoing - Calling for 30% of the world's oceans to be protected by 2030 ([link](#))
- 2019 - Extended Blue Belt scheme: £7 million extra funding to protect UK marine life (G7) ([link](#))
- 2019 - 41 new Marine Conservation Zones, marking the most significant expansion of England's 'Blue Belt' of protected areas to date. Total now 91. ([link](#))
- 2018 - Working to create a new oceans strategy ([link](#))
- 2018 - Cutting red tape for divers retrieving marine litter ([link](#))
- 2017 - Established the Blue Belt programme, protecting 8,000 square miles of UK waters ([link](#))
- 2017 - Pledged to help small island developing states with marine science, research and conservation projects ([link](#))
- 2017 - Boosting sustainable fishing by banning discards for certain types of fish ([link](#))
- 2012 - Establishing marine conservation zones ([link](#))

### **Plastics**

- Ongoing - Planning to ban plastic straws, cotton-buds and stirrers ([link](#))
- Ongoing - Consulting on the introduction of a deposit return scheme ([link](#))
- 2019 - Plastic bag sales down 90% since introduction of 5p charge ([link](#))
- 2018 - Led the Commonwealth countries in the fight against plastic pollution ([link](#))
- 2017 - Required large retailers to charge 5p for single use plastic carrier bags ([link](#))
- 2017 - Doubling maximum litter fines to £150 ([link](#))
- 2016 - Banned microbeads ([link](#))

### **Natural Environment**

- 2019 onwards - Urban Tree Challenge Fund: £10 million plan will see more than 130,000 trees planted across England's towns and cities ([link](#))
- 2019 - Cash boost and fairer funding formula for farmers across the UK (£56 million until 2022) ([link](#))
- 2019 onwards - Environment Bill Policy Statement ([link](#))
- 2015 onwards - Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund: Funding to help groups of farmers, foresters and land managers improve the natural environment. (4th round £2.5 million) ([link](#))

- Ongoing - Field to Fork review of the food system & National Food Strategy (inc hospital and school meals) ([link](#))
- Ongoing - Designing a new system to replace the Common Agricultural Policy with one that prioritises environmental protections ([link](#))
- 2018 - 25 Year Environment Plan ([link](#))
- 2018 - Resources and Waste Strategy ([link](#))
- 2018 - Expanding and enhancing woodland in National Parks ([link](#))
- 2018 - Backed a new Northern Forest, covering more than 120 miles ([link](#))
- 2018 - Challenged water companies to improve their environmental record and improve at least 6000 kilometres of our waters ([link](#))
- 2018 - Embedding a 'net environmental gain' principle to ensure new housing developments deliver environmental improvements locally and nationally ([link](#))
- 2016 - Established the Natural Capital Committee to provide independent advice on protecting the environment ([link](#))
- 2013 - Introduced the Payment for Ecosystem Services scheme, encouraging land managers to maintain and enhance the natural environment ([link](#))
- 2013 - Introduced a catchment management approach to improve the quality of our water environment ([link](#))
- 2012 - Established 12 Nature Improvement Areas ([link](#))
- 2012 - Launched the Love Your River campaign to encourage people to value their local river ([link](#))
- 2012 - Created the Canal and River Trust to make Britain's waterways cleaner and more beautiful ([link](#))
- 2011 - Launched the Biodiversity 2020 strategy ([Link](#))

### Climate Change

- 2019 - Green Finance Strategy introduced ([link](#))
- 2019 - G7: UK announced £1.44billion contribution to international Green Climate Fund ([link](#))
- 2019 - World-leading ambition for first "net-zero carbon" cluster by 2040 to cut emissions, backed by up to £170 million funding ([link](#))
- 2019 - PM announced £10 million to protect & restore Amazon rainforest ([link](#))
- Ongoing - £315 million Industrial Energy Transformation Fund (IETF) will support businesses with high energy use to transition to a low carbon future. ([link](#))
- 2019 - Offshore Wind Sector Deal - to provide a third of UK electricity from offshore wind by 2030 ([link](#))
- 2019 - £26 million awarded to accelerate rollout of carbon capture and storage ([link](#))
- 2019 - Becoming the first major economy in the world to legislate for net zero emissions by 2050 to end the UK's contribution to climate change entirely ([link](#))
- Ongoing - UK bids to host COP26 (UN climate change summit) to encourage other countries to raise the ambition of their climate targets ([link](#))
- Ongoing - Phasing out unabated coal by 2025 ([link](#))
- Ongoing - Providing £3 billion by 2022-23 for Contracts for Difference auctions to help develop less established renewable technologies ([link](#))
- Ongoing - Generating more electricity from offshore wind than any other country in the world ([link](#))
- Ongoing - Invested £52 billion in renewable energy since 2010 ([link](#))

- 2018 - Launched CCUS Action Plan - setting out the next steps towards the government's ambition to deploy CCUS at scale during the 2030s ([link](#))
- 2018 - Reduced our greenhouse emissions by over a fifth ([link](#))
- 2018 - Made £557 million available for new renewable energy projects ([link](#))
- 2018 - Making £60 million available for innovators and researchers to tackle climate change ([link](#))
- 2018 - Making £40 million available through the Clean Growth Fund ([Link](#))
- 2018 - Working with experts to set a date to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions to zero ([link](#))
- 2018 - Making £343 million available to reduce emissions in the civil aerospace sectors. ([link](#))
- 2017 - UK & Canada launch Powering Past Coal Alliance ([link](#))
- 2017 - 2017 was the cleanest and greenest year ever for electricity, with coal providing just two per cent of the UK's electricity ([link](#))
- 2017 - Launched the Clean Growth Strategy ([link](#))
- 2017 - Established a taskforce to accelerate the growth of green finance and the UK's low carbon economy ([link](#))
- 2016 - Secured the Paris Agreement ([link](#))
- 2016 - Published the Fifth Carbon Budget which outlined the UK will reduce emissions by 57 per cent by 2032 ([link](#))
- 2014 - Published the first ever solar strategy which helped to roll out enough solar power in the UK to power 2 million homes ([link](#))
- 2013 - Introducing carbon pricing to reduce the emissions firms release into the atmosphere ([link](#))
- 2013 - Introduced the Renewable Heat Incentive scheme to encourage households and businesses to install renewable heat systems ([link](#))
- 2013 - Established the International Climate Fund to provide £3.87 billion to help the world's poorest adapt to climate change ([link](#))
- 2011 - Established the Green Investment Bank ([link](#))
- 2011 - Launched the Green Infrastructure Partnership ([link](#))