

Essential reading for Scotland's children's sector

April - May 2020 Issue 197

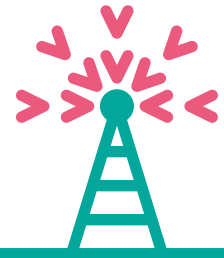
# Children in Scotland magazine

"As the young people who will have to live with the consequences of a crisis we did not create, we refuse to accept your odds"

## Children of the revolution

A special edition exploring how climate action now could save our future





## **Mindfulness work with children and young people**

Jan Montgomery



## **Leadership & management: attunement in leading, developing and mediating**

Sandra Strathie, Glen Strathie Ltd



## **Supporting children and young people who internalise their distress**

Jan Montgomery



## **The rupture-repair cycle: with Dr Suzanne Zeedyk**

Dr Suzanne Zeedyk



## **Nursery to primary: easing transitions through play**

Kate Johnston



## **The teenage brain: implications for behaviour and learning**

Jan Montgomery





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**April-May 2020**

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to flourish.

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# Welcome...



**Jennifer Drummond**  
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The issue of climate change and environmental emergency has been creeping up both the political and the social agenda for some time. The actions of Swedish schoolgirl, Greta Thunberg, and her peers have galvanised a whole generation to campaign for change, and hold elected officials to account for their lack of actions. Our cover quote, taken from an open letter written by climate activists (see page 8) makes it clear; the status quo will no longer be accepted.

The global pandemic has, for the time being, put paid to the large scale demonstrations, international gatherings and political activity needed to achieve cross-country consensus and tangible progress. But the issue of climate change must not be forgotten.

This, a special 'green' edition, looks at what action could, should and is being taken now to save the future of our planet. We hope it will inspire you to consider what we can do as individuals, as families and as communities to help reduce the impact of modern living on the

environment. It also gives hope that all is not lost, if we act now.

You will also note that this environmental issue, rather fittingly, is our first fully digital edition. Driven by environmental considerations, it is also the effect of the national shutdown. We will continue to offer our members support and the services we know you appreciate, but we, like many others, have had to adapt to our new normal.

We know our readers appreciate our print copy and pre-pandemic were working hard to ensure we had a robust environmental print policy in place, including changes to our paper source and packaging whilst continuing to support our local, small business printing house. We hope to resume this as soon as we can.

In the meantime, stay safe, stay home (if you are able to) – and happy reading.

*Drummond*

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Read our **interview with two young climate activists** who are demanding action and leading change from the front (page 10) and find out about our **consultation work with children and young people on behalf of the Crown Estate in Scotland** (page 14).

## AGENDA | PAGES 18-23

**Roseanna Cunningham MSP** outlines the opportunities for Scotland to drive change (page 18), we hear from **experts in the field on the question of economy vs environment** (page 20) and **Shelagh Young** reflects on the road to clean air, in her response to our 25 Calls campaign (page 22).

## VOICES | PAGES 24-30

This edition, we consider the great work going on in schools to educate our future leaders. Keep Scotland Beautiful tell us about their **Climate Ready Classrooms programme** (page 24) and we hear recommendations from three schools who share the coveted title of **Scotland's Climate Champions** (page 27).

## MORE | PAGES 2,5,8,31

Review our **new webinar series** (page 2), catch up on all the **latest news** (page 5) and meet the face behind the new **Plot to Plate** initiative promoting food sustainability (page 30). See pages 31 and 32 to find out how to **keep up to date with Children in Scotland news** and how we are continuing to support our members.



## Key stories from across the sector

Lead news story

# "We will not allow you to surrender our future," climate activists tell EU leaders

In March, the European Commission announced a new climate change law which would make the 27-country bloc climate neutral by 2050.

The first ever climate law, unveiled on March 4, legislates to make the ambition of cutting greenhouse gas emissions to zero by mid-century irreversible and legally-binding for all member states. To achieve this goal, the European Commission is proposing to regularly raise the EU's emission target over the next three decades. However, there is no plan to raise the overall emissions goal for 2030.

The latter has been criticised by climate activists, who say refusal to reset the interim target is detrimental to a credible fight against climate change.

In an open letter penned to EU leaders, 34 youth climate activists including Greta Thunberg, have urged EU governments to focus on reducing immediate emissions in line with the Paris Agreement.

"Net zero emissions by 2050 for the EU equals surrender. It means giving up", says the letter. "We don't just need goals for 2030 or 2050. We need them for 2020 and every month and year to come."

It also states: "Such a law sends a strong signal that real, sufficient action is being taken when in fact it's not."

"It suggests our elected leaders fully understand the situation we are in and that we can 'fix the climate crisis' within today's system without making any sacrifices."

"We are in a crisis that has never once been treated as a crisis."

"The climate law is surrender... and we will not allow you to surrender our future".

The letter urges leaders to base their action on scientific evidence and predictions, and to pay more attention to "rapidly disappearing carbon budgets".

It warns a plan to cut carbon emissions in the long-term only offers a 50% chance of staying below a 1.5C global average temperature rise and expresses frustration on the reliance on new technology and a "pretence of subsidising new fossil-fuel infrastructures whilst maintaining loopholes for deforestation".

The 34 signatories of the letter, which represent 17 countries, pledge to continue with campaign activity until the development of a science-based pathway which gives "the best possible chance to safeguard the future living conditions for humanity and life as we know it."

> **Read the open letter in full** [Page 8](#)

> **"Climate change is not an abstract or far away problem"** Roseanna Cunningham, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, comments on Scotland's efforts [Agenda, page 18](#)

## Scotland celebrates adoption milestone with 600th match



New figures released in March show 600 hundred matches have been made between children in care and prospective parents since 2011 - the equivalent of more than one a week.

The success has been credited to the development and continued use of Scotland's Adoption Register.

The Register, launched in 2011, is an online database which facilitates matching between looked after children and prospective adopters.

Robin Duncan, Manager of Scotland's Adoption Register, said:

"The statistics are less important than the stories of the children and families involved, but the milestone of 600 matches is a really heartening sign of how well the Register is working and how it continues to create good solutions for some of Scotland's most vulnerable children."

To celebrate the milestone, a new website from Adoption UK has also now been launched which offers key advice and guidance for current and prospective adoptive parents.

> **Visit the new website at** [adoption.scot](https://adoption.scot)

> **Scotland's Adoption Register is funded by the Scottish Government and hosted by St Andrew's Children's Society.**

## First online children's hospice launched

Children's Hospices Across Scotland (CHAS) has launched the UK's first virtual children's hospice to support children with life-shortening conditions and their families.

The virtual hospice will offer families nursing, medical and pharmacy advice by phone and video; bereavement support; money and benefits advice; and practical advice around coronavirus. The service will also offer a storytelling service for children at home; letter writing for children and parents; activity packs and art clubs and virtual Clowndocor visits.

Rami Okasha, CEO of CHAS said:

"For families who can't come to the hospice, we will take our hospice to them. Our nurses will be reaching out to families to offer advice and support. Our dedicated volunteers will make friendship calls to ensure parents never feel alone. Our specialist teams are on hand to provide clinical advice and keep children smiling with a suite of great activities. We can do all that, ensuring face-to-face care is prioritised for emergencies and crisis."

Alongside the launch of the virtual children's hospice, CHAS is also working with all three children's hospitals in Scotland. CHAS's support in hospitals includes the first hospital-based palliative care teams in the Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow which was launched last year, and specialist colleagues working alongside the NHS in Edinburgh, Inverness, Aberdeen and Kilmarnock.

## Young people call for more knowledge, flexibility and help when delivering additional support in schools

Scotland's Inclusion Ambassadors have made a series of recommendations calling for more knowledge, flexibility and consistent support for their learning.

Using their own experience, the group highlighted inconsistencies in knowledge of additional needs, a lack of communication across professionals, especially in the primary to secondary school stage, and varying levels or availability of support.

They called for more recognition of the capabilities of young people with additional support needs, a willingness from teachers to adapt methods and pace of learning and more understanding and empathy from their peers.

The group, who are supported by Children in Scotland and Enquire, have a range of additional support needs and attend a variety of school provision. Their recommendations were made to Angela Morgan, Chair of the review into the implementation of additional support for learning. Ms Morgan is expected to publish a report in Spring 2020.

> **Find out more about the Inclusion Ambassadors at** [childreninscotland.org.uk/inclusion-ambassadors/](https://childreninscotland.org.uk/inclusion-ambassadors/)





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# New Observatory monitoring children's human rights launched

The first national observatory of children's rights has been launched in Edinburgh.

The Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland aims to bring together children and professionals with expertise in rights, to amplify the impact of research on policy. It will work to improve the day-to-day lives and experiences of children and young people.

Initiated by the University of Edinburgh, University of Strathclyde, the Scottish Youth Parliament, the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, and Together, the Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights, the Observatory was formally launched in February.

Speaking at the launch event, Professor Kay Tisdall, Chair of Childhood Policy at the University of Edinburgh, said:

"Working together, we hope the Observatory will have a significant and positive impact on children's human dignity, ensuring they are respected and supported to reach their full potential, because when our children and young people thrive, our communities and our society thrives too."



The launch event also saw the publication of Together's 2019 State of Children's Rights Report.

The report considers the extent to which children in Scotland are able to exercise their human rights as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), detailing areas of progress as well as where Scotland is currently falling short.

The 2019 report highlights the importance of delivering on the Scottish Government's pledge to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots Law by 2021, pointing to the UK's exit from the European Union and the subsequent loss of human rights protections as further reason to act without delay.

Juliet Harris, Director of Together, said:

"Our State of Children's Rights report 2019 shows how much more needs to be done. From increasing concerns about child poverty and mental health through to food insecurity and bullying, many children still experience breaches of their rights on a day-to-day basis. We hope our roadmap for action will support Scotland to realise its potential and become a country where the rights of all children are realised all of the time"

As well as the full report, Together has produced a child-friendly version, designed to appeal to younger readers.

> Find out more about the Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland at [ed.ac.uk/education/observatory](https://ed.ac.uk/education/observatory)

> Download the State of Children's Rights 2019 report at [togetherscotland.org.uk](https://togetherscotland.org.uk)

> Image ©Liv Wan for Together

## Scouts celebrate the Great Indoors

Scouts UK is offering vital support to families affected by the ongoing school closures, providing a free resource packed with games, activities and craft ideas to do at home.

The collection, which includes 100 activities, is designed to keep young people entertained and educated during the extended period of time at home. Each activity has been designed around a clear set of outcomes, such as developing communication skills or learning how to problem solve, supporting schools in their aim to keep school-age children learning at home.

Chief Scout, Bear Grylls, endorsed the resources, saying:

"There's something for everyone here to keep learning and having fun, while warding off cabin fever. They'll help families stay busy, focused and cheerful."

The resources will be complemented by Facebook Live 'how to' videos, delivered by Scouts Ambassadors including Steve Backshall and Helen Glover.

> Access the activities collection at [scouts.org.uk/the-great-indoors](https://scouts.org.uk/the-great-indoors)

> Share your activities on social media #TheGreatIndoors

## News Analysis

# We need to protect the vulnerable in times of crisis... and beyond

The emergence of COVID-19 has been met with unprecedented interventions, economic measures and new legislative powers. But scrutiny of government activity, support for families and collective action is required now more than ever, writes **Chris Ross**.

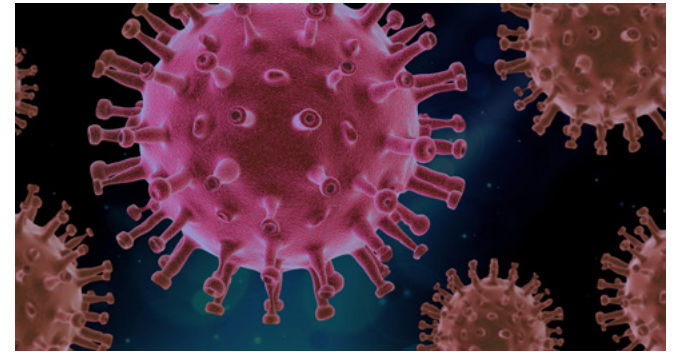
Children in Scotland broadly supports the UK Government's economic measures to mitigate the impact of coronavirus. However, the crisis still has the potential to cause a stark increase in poverty. Applications for universal credit have rocketed, reinforcing the need to remove the five week waiting period and review the level of financial support offered. We have joined calls to increase child benefit by £10 per week during this time.

The UK Government's wide-ranging Coronavirus Act provides emergency powers to the government and public bodies to support the response to the pandemic over the next two years. Many of these will be essential, but they also have implications for children's rights and wellbeing. Unfortunately, the speed at which this legislation was required has limited the usual opportunities for scrutiny of such changes.

We are clear about the need for new powers to respond to increasing demand on public services amid the current crisis. But oversight of these new powers is required and there must be opportunities for action if they detrimentally affect children and young people. We will work with partners across the children's sector to ensure new powers are being used appropriately and will continue to seek assurances that they will not be used to infringe on the rights of those who need our support most.

The strict measures in place are already having an enormous impact on children, young people and families. Schools and nurseries have closed for everyone except the children of 'key workers' and children identified as being vulnerable, or require additional support. However, our last meeting of the Children in Scotland Strategic Forum in April heard that only 1% of children with multi-agency plans are taking up this entitlement.

School closures, whilst necessary, compromise access to other support traditionally accessed through schools, such as free school meals and free sanitary products. Children in Scotland welcomes the approach to provide financial aid, in lieu of these services, to those who need it – though we are aware this is not an option everywhere, and take-up has been slow.



There is also a unique challenge for children and families who have a higher level of need due to abusive family situations or child protection concerns. We have also heard warnings from those who work directly with families in these situations, that there is a risk that more families or children may find themselves in a vulnerable situation, previously shielded by the routine and safe spaces offered by school, nursery, work or community spaces.

Many services that work with families in these situations will be operating at reduced capacity. How we support these families during this time is paramount. However, this casts further light on the need for sustained action outside of times of national crisis to reduce demand.

It is clear that there is learning to be taken from the challenges we currently face. It has highlighted how education can be adapted to be delivered digitally and further evidenced the need for reform to the social security system to provide a stronger safety net. We are mindful that support will be required for children and families, particularly those who have struggled with the change in routine, both now and during any transition back to the 'regular' school structure.

Finally, the current situation has demonstrated the need for better holistic support for children and families, across a number of services and in a number of areas of their lives. Children in Scotland will continue to advocate for this, both in this time of crisis and in the future.

**Chris Ross is Policy Officer at Children in Scotland**

> Find out more about how we are continuing to offer support to our members and wider community [Page 31](#)



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In March, 34 youth climate activists called for urgent action on the climate crisis. Here, we publish their statement in full.

# An open letter to Leaders at the European Parliament, European Commission and all member states

“Any climate law or policy that is not based on the current best available science and does not include the global aspect of equity or climate justice – principles at the very heart of the Paris Agreement – will do more harm than good.

Such a law sends a strong signal that real, sufficient action is being taken when in fact it's not.

It also suggests that you, our elected leaders, fully understand the situation we're in and that we can “fix the climate crisis” within today's system without making any sacrifices.

The hard fact is that neither the awareness nor the politics needed are anywhere in sight. We are in a crisis that has never once been treated as a crisis.

For more than 1.5 years we have been sacrificing our education, protesting against your inaction. Last September more than 7.5 million people across the globe took to the streets – demanding that you unite behind the science and give us a safe future.

But, clearly, that was too much to ask for.

## Carbon budgets

Our rapidly disappearing carbon budgets are the bottom line that sum up the current best available climate science. No matter how insufficient they may be they are the most reliable roadmap we have to safeguard the future living conditions for human kind. And yet they are being completely ignored by policy makers, media and those in power.

> Image: istockphoto.com ©DisobeyArt



This must change starting this very minute.

No plan, policy or commitment will be nearly enough as long as we just continue to ignore the CO2 budget which applies for today.

“Net zero emissions by 2050” for the EU equals surrender. It means giving up. We don't just need goals for just 2030 or 2050. We, above all, need them for 2020 and every following month and year to come. Because distant net-zero emission targets will mean absolutely nothing if we just continue to ignore the carbon dioxide budget – which applies for today, not a faraway future. If high emissions continue like now even for a few years that remaining budget will soon be completely used up.

And until we have the technologies that at scale can put our emissions to minus then we must forget about net zero or “carbon neutrality”. We need real zero.

If you are to reach the commitments you signed up for in the Paris Agreement, our carbon emissions must eventually come to an end. And science tells us that process must – drastically – start today.

And since these negative emissions technologies that you put all your faith in don't exist today at scale, we simply need to stop doing certain things. Even if that means we have to change our economy.

This is the uncomfortable truth that you cannot escape, no matter how badly you want to and how hard you try. And the longer you keep running away from that truth, the bigger your betrayal towards future generations.

## Populist ideas

A very popular idea among policymakers seems to be cutting our emissions in half by 2030. But let us once again remind you: this is only for an estimated 50% chance of staying below a 1.5C global average temperature rise, according to the IPCC.

And these insufficient odds do not even include most feedback loops, non-linear tipping points nor additional warming hidden by life threatening air pollution.

It does, however, include assumptions that future generations will somehow be able to suck hundreds of billions of tonnes of CO2 out of the atmosphere with technologies that might never exist at scale, and definitely won't in the timeframe we have to stay in line with the Paris Agreement.

And since this budget is global, it does not include the essential aspect of equity. This means that if the EU would go for these extremely unfavorable odds we would still need to do much more than a 50% reduction by 2030 to compensate for developing countries who need to be able to improve the standard of living for their citizens. Because this is what the Paris Agreement clearly says and this is what you have all signed up for.

Even a child can understand that these odds are way too risky. We – as the young people who will have to live with the consequences of this crisis that we did not create – find them unacceptable.

We refuse to accept these odds.

The best chance we have for staying below a 1.5C global average temperature rise, given by the IPCC, is a 67% probability. To give us those chances, we have a budget of less than 340 Gt of CO2 left to emit globally to stay within that target. With today's business-as-usual, that budget will only last for about eight more years.

And, again, please note that the additional risks of tipping points and feedback loops – as well as the exclusion of the aspect of equity – that apply to the 50% budget also goes for this one, making even this option very far from safe.

## Climate justice

These budgets have never been taken into account in today's politics. They have never been communicated in the mainstream media. And, yet, here you are trying



> Our staff at the Edinburgh march for Action against Climate Change, September 2019

to create laws and policies, once again completely ignoring them.

Pretending that your plan or policy – disregarding the united science – will somehow solve the biggest crisis humanity has ever faced.

Pretending that a law that no one has to follow is a law.

Pretending you can go on building and subsidising new fossil-fuel infrastructure, while maintaining loopholes for disastrous “green” deforestation.

Pretending that leaving out the global aspect of equity and climate justice won't risk the entire Paris Agreement.

Pretending that empty words will make the emergency go away. This arrogance must come to an end.

We will not be satisfied with anything less than a science-based pathway which gives us the best possible chance to safeguard the future living conditions for humanity and life on earth as we know it.

Anything else is surrender. This climate law is surrender – because nature doesn't bargain and you cannot make “deals” with physics.

And we will not allow you to surrender on our future.

Until you take this seriously, we will remain here in the streets. Until you take this seriously, we will keep repeating the science. Until you take this seriously, we will tell you to go home, study the facts and come back when you've done your homework. ”

## Signatories

Greta Thunberg, Sweden Luisa Neubauer, Germany Adélaïde Charlier, Belgium Anuna De Wever, Belgium Saoi O'Connor, FFF Ireland Bianca Castro, FFF Portugal Valentina Burdukovska, FFF Latvia Liene Kņaze, FFF Latvia Līva Ašmane, FFF Latvia Dārta Anna Celma, FFF Latvia Laura Treimane, FFF Latvia Aleksandrs Lapinskis, FFF Latvia David Wicker, FFF Italy Chloe Motolese, FFF Italy Isabelle Axelsson, Sweden Julie Schümmer, Belgium Stijn Warmenhoven, The Netherlands Robert Schüller Zakas, FFF Greece Maria Papatheodorou, FFF Greece Ell Jarl, FFF Sweden Simon Lagerlöf, FFF Sweden Rikke Damgaard Nielsen, FFF Denmark Elijah McKenzie-Jackson, FFF England Dave Kock, FFF Lithuania Saule Zokaityte, FFF Lithuania Alvin Farrugia, FFF Malta Venus Langely, FFF Malta Lena Selyem, FFF Hungary Cléophée Fusier, FFF Romania Camille Salar, FFF Romania Mia Luka Vincetić, FFF Croatia Maria Serra, FFF Spain Alby Kotěšovec, FFF Czech Republic



Interview

# “Our obsession with wealth is killing our climate”

Two young climate activists, Holly and Coll, urge society to go further in addressing the climate crisis and call for the environmental emergency to be higher on the political agenda. *Interview by Jennifer Drummond*

Teenagers Holly Gillibrand and Coll McCail have already spent many hours of their young lives dedicated to raising awareness and fighting for action to address the climate crisis.

Holly, from Lochaber in the Scottish Highlands, has been recognised locally and nationally for her passion for the natural world. Concerned about the threats facing the modern world, and feeling powerless, Holly found a community of young activists online who refused to let age be a barrier to finding and using their voice. Encouraged by them and inspired by Greta Thunberg, she joined her local school strikes in 2018 and hasn't stopped. She is an environmental columnist for her local paper, a volunteer for OneKind and Scottish Youth Climate Strike and a rewilding ambassador for Scotland: The Big Picture. She was also shortlisted for Newsquest Scotland's Young Scotswoman of the Year 2019 (the winner was still to be announced at the time of publication).

Coll joined the Scottish Green Party aged 12, motivated by a desire to fight for the planet. Now an active party member, he is also part of Children in Scotland's children and young people's advisory group and a youth advisor to the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland. He has spoken publicly about climate change, including at an Edinburgh rally as well as to more than 100 professionals at Children in Scotland's annual conference in 2019. For Coll, climate change and other environmental problems are inextricably linked to the ethics of the global economic system and the malpractices of globalism.

For this special edition, we spoke to Holly and Coll about the environmental agenda, discussing concern for the future of the planet and the need to act locally, nationally and globally.

> Holly holds a placard during a Fridays for our Future strike (opposite)

**What are the most pressing issues or our biggest problems in terms of climate change and threat to the environment?**

**Coll McCail:** I believe the greatest problem is our failure to recognise its greatest cause – consumerism and capitalism. These issues are huge and would affect our daily lives, so instead we pick other smaller issues to focus on, like recycling, carrying reusable water bottles and using paper straws. As important as these are, we are skirting the big issue.

**“Without regulation, we cannot properly challenge polluters”**

*Coll*

Our culture relies on financial orientation, a will to achieve great wealth. Our economy relies on customers and consumers. We are encouraged to buy more than we need and to buy branded products promoted by celebrities. It is this unhealthy obsession with wealth that is killing our climate, fuelling fast fashion, international air travel and plastic pollution. The top-down approach capitalism takes empowers big business, multinational companies and global conglomerates through free markets and unregulated trade, rather than local communities. As long as governments do not properly regulate capitalism we cannot properly challenge polluters and climate change.

**Holly Gillibrand:** I don't believe there is one biggest issue or most important threat. They are all important. Tackling just one issue and ignoring all the others is like jumping out of the way of a bus on the highway, into the path of another vehicle. If it isn't the climate crisis that destroys our civilisation, then it might be ecological breakdown, the loss of topsoil or the sixth mass extinction. We must act urgently on all of them.

**The School Strike movement has really gained momentum over the last 12+ months, with pupils all across the country, and indeed the world, striking in order to raise awareness of the issue. Why is this an important and/or effective way of raising awareness?**

> Continues on page 12





**HG:** I have been striking from school every Friday morning for the last 61 weeks. The strikes are important because they are more radical than normal protests or rallies, and mass civil disobedience is what we need right now. The strikes also approach the environmental crisis from a different perspective: those of children and the fact that our futures are being stolen. For a long time, it was the same people with the same message about these issues, but now the conversation has changed, largely because of the school climate strikes.

**CM:** I have been involved in climate demonstrations including school strikes, anti-fracking protests and climate marches. The school strike movement is important in establishing an interest and activism in key issues amongst young people. In Scotland, we are in an incredibly fortunate position when it comes to engagement amongst young people, thanks largely to the 2014 referendum (for which the voting age in Scotland was reduced to 16) that sparked an interest in politics for young people. The school strikes enhance this interest, encouraging future generations to take an active interest in our democracy. Politicians and decision makers are aware that young people can no longer be overlooked and their views and concerns are valid. Furthermore, the strikes have played a huge role in improving the profile of young people. No one can say young people are uninterested or disengaged.

**The Scottish Government has committed to an ambitious target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030, along with a host of other measures, through their proposed Climate Change Act. Do you think this is achievable? Does it go far enough?**

**CM:** The aims of the climate bill can be achieved, but only through significant social attitude and messaging change.

Climate change is currently a class issue. The majority of young people who take part in marches and school strikes, generally speaking, come from middle and upper class backgrounds. Amongst poorer communities, young people are alienated by the rhetoric from these campaigns, which tell them how to live their lives – and what they are doing wrong.

For the government's goals to be achieved everyone must take action. We need to rethink our messaging. As long as the green movement looks down on those who do not engage with it, government aims cannot be achieved.

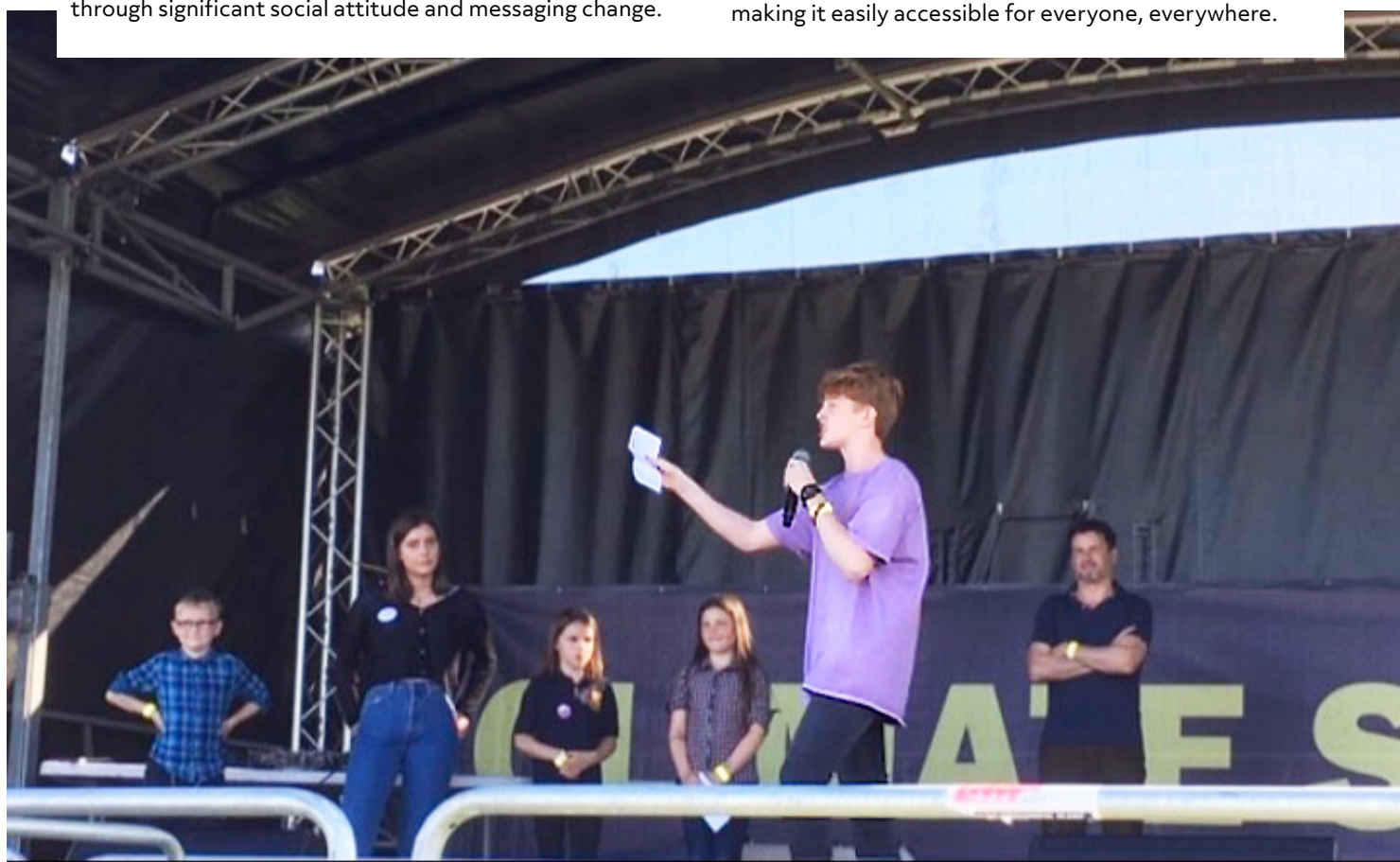
**HG:** I think this target is a good start, but we need to be going much further. We should be aiming for zero emissions by 2030. Achieving this is not a question of making targets for several decades from now, but what we do this year, and next year, and the year after that. Our emissions need to be going steeply downwards from 2020. If we continue with high emissions for just a few more years, our carbon budget for 1.5 degrees of warming will be gone. What we do today is more important than what we say we're going to do tomorrow.

**There are some policies which have been enacted across Scotland in a bid to directly address our emissions. These include the recently announced national policy of free bus travel for under-19s to encourage the use of public transport. What do you think of this policy? Are there any others you would like to see that would make a direct impact on Scotland's emissions or other output harmful to the environment?**

**HG:** I think it is an excellent policy. It should be followed with improving the standard of public transport and making it easily accessible for everyone, everywhere.

**"What we do today is more important than what we say we will do tomorrow"**

*Holly*



> Coll speaks at a rally for climate change (above)

There are so many changes that could be made to protect Scotland's environment, such as making all public transport free, raising the price of flights, banning driven grouse shooting, rewilding large swathes of the Scottish highlands, ending fossil fuel subsidies, letting nature thrive alongside people in our cities and towns, reforming the education system, creating a circular economy, making the welfare of people and nature our top priority... the list goes on and on.

**CM:** The free bus travel policy is excellent. It will not only lower emissions but encourage more social interaction amongst young people.

In terms of what policy initiatives I would like to see, top of my list is the proper tax rate for corporations and conglomerates. These multinational businesses contribute hugely to global air travel, pollution and the destruction of local communities yet pay next to no tax.

**As a part of our 25 Calls campaign, Alex Quayle of Sustrans Scotland called for cars to be banned from school drop-offs in order to boost active travel and reduce air pollution. What do you think of this proposal?**

**CM:** This would be a step in the right direction. However, I feel we need to be discouraging the use of cars more generally and campaigning for an improved public transport system to reduce the need for cars at school drop-off. Banning cars from drop-off sends a strong message that we take engine idling very seriously, but I would question the practicality of the ban without other measures.

**HG:** This type of ban would help address the negative health impacts on children. But we should also educate the parents and children as to why this is happening, because awareness is key in creating lasting change. For success, we would also need to ensure there are adequate ways for children to get to school by walking or cycling or public transport.

**Plastic waste has been identified as one of the most harmful to our environment. The recent BBC documentary 'War on Plastic' showed the impact plastic waste was having on the water and beaches around the world. Do you think we should be imposing restrictions on the use of plastic packaging? What could this look like?**

**HG:** Single-use plastic packaging needs to be reduced and replaced with sustainable, less wasteful packaging. It might mean buying loose vegetables in supermarkets and local shops. It might mean that we won't be able to buy single-use plastic bottles and bags. We also need to look at the bigger picture and think about how we can improve or change all aspects of our society when it comes to plastic and other wasteful behaviours, not just packaging.

**CM:** It's time we stopped using plastics wherever we can and impose penalties on the companies that continue to use plastic packaging. There are a myriad of viable alternatives to plastic that do not have the same damaging effects.

## Holly and Coll's top tips for living a more eco-friendly life:

1. Switch to a plant-based diet
2. Fly less. Or better yet, stop flying altogether.
3. Buy only what you need. Buying more only leads to waste.
4. Shop locally and sustainably.
5. Avoid using the car. Walk, or utilise public transport where possible.
6. Join movements like the school climate strikes and Extinction Rebellion.
7. Fight for social justice!

With regard to plastic bottles, in the past we have seen systems where glass bottles were used, washed, returned and reused. I see no reason why this strategy could not be applied to drinks manufacturers using single use plastic.

**COP26, the international gathering of global leaders to discuss the climate emergency, was scheduled to come to Scotland though has since been postponed. When reconvened, what is the key message you would like the global leaders to hear?**

**CM:** The need for system change. The need to turn our top-down economy on its head so that it works for all rather than just a select few. This will in turn enable communities to combat climate change at a local level across the nation that, when combined, would form a national strategy. Capitalism is a primary cause of climate change, yet we are attempting to solve the issue within the same system. The era of consumerism is over.

I would also like to see a strategy on how to maintain the political engagement amongst young people brought on by the climate strikes. We must continue to foster the involvement of our next generation if we want our democracy to be healthy in the years to come.

**HG:** Global leaders need to learn from their actions in relation to the current global pandemic. In responding to the Coronavirus outbreak, they have proven that they can act in a crisis. Now, they must apply that urgency and level of action to the climate and ecological emergency.

> Keep up to date with the work and activity of both Holly and Coll on Twitter: [@HollyWildChild](#) [@CollMcCaill](#)



# The environment – our crowning glory?

**In 2019, we undertook engagement work with children and young people to help inform the Crown Estate Scotland's 2020-23 Corporate Plan. *Jane Miller* charts the project and highlights key recommendations**



Over the last few years, the environment has been highlighted as a key area of concern for young people in Scotland. The youth-led climate strikes have seen unprecedented numbers of young people taking to the streets to urge the UK Government to commit to a specific target of achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Last year, Children in Scotland was commissioned by Crown Estate Scotland, who manage all land and property in Scotland owned by the monarchy, to conduct specific engagement activities about their work.

We gathered the views and experiences of children and young people (aged 7-25) through direct sessions and with an online survey during November and December 2019. Engagement work took place in three local authority areas – Midlothian, Argyll and Bute and North Ayrshire. We used a range of different participative methods to engage with a diverse range of children and young people.

The activities were visual and interactive and included opportunities to work as a whole group, in smaller groups, in pairs and individually. The activities

encouraged discussion and involved character creation, arts and crafts, physical games, mapping and voting. The children we spoke to were clear that the environment was a key area of concern. Children and young people told us that anxiety surrounding damage to the environment was having an impact on how they were feeling and identified specific areas they felt required attention.

## Marine Pollution

Protecting the sea and the seabed was discussed by many we engaged with. The group were worried about plastic pollution and levels of waste within the sea and the impact that pollution would have on sea life and the fishing industry. We heard that more action should be taken to tackle rubbish and waste from entering the sea and surrounding coastal areas.

They also felt there should be rules about how many fish and sea life are caught, promoting sustainability within the sector and to prevent over-fishing. This aligns closely with objectives already outlined in the Crown Estate Scotland's current strategic plan.

**"A healthy environment underpins our very existence"**

## Coastal Areas and Ports

Pollution was raised when discussing the regeneration of coastal areas. Young people felt that outdoors spaces such as parks, forests, harbours and moors helped them to feel happy, healthy and safe. With this in mind, they called for more to be done to preserve and protect these areas, and for any development within these spaces to be mindful of the environment and use renewable sources of energy.

## Land

First and foremost, young people felt it was important that efforts are made to protect the natural environment. They felt it was the responsibility of farmers to ensure that their practices are not damaging or harmful. The use of organic pesticides was specifically mentioned.

This also extended to the protection of animals, with young people clear that animal welfare should be paramount. Ethical farming, mindful of the conditions animals were kept in and the farming practices used, was also highlighted as a priority.

To support the farming community and help protect the environment, young people also recommended buying locally.

## Community involvement

Finally, the group felt that communities need to be able to have their voices heard and should be at the heart of all decision-making in order to ensure that local needs are understood and taken seriously.

## Recommendations

Based on our discussions and engagement with children and young people on behalf of the Crown Estate Scotland, Children in Scotland produced a report and submitted a series of recommendations.

We also made some recommendations of our own.

These were largely around how the Crown Estate Scotland could meaningfully engage with children and young people in the future, and communicate their messages to this key demographic. These included: developing a more accessible Corporate Plan, encouraging young people to apply to be non-executive board members and partnering with children and young people-centred organisations.

Recommendations relating specifically to the Corporate Plan included: making more of an explicit reference to the role that community engagement will have on decision-making, enhanced partnerships working with environmental organisations, working with the Scottish Government to ensure that there is secured funding to help make a sustainable future for farming and fishing, and working in partnership with national farm, land and sea bodies to ensure they are engaged and involved in planning for the future of Scotland and the planet.

It's clear that the environment is going to be an ongoing area of concern for children and young people, and is a key area for focus for all of society. This is no longer, and never should have been, an

## Taking action

In response to this work from Children in Scotland, Crown Estate Scotland have taken forward a series of recommendations, and committed to action.

These include:

- Commitment to educational activities which will help children and young people access rural and coastal areas
- Recruitment of a young Board observer, with the hope that more young people will apply in coming years
- Commitment to new projects to help tackle marine litter
- Inclusion of a children's wellbeing and rights check in future decision-making
- Production of a new video to help children and young people learn more about Crown Estate Scotland in a more engaging way.

add-on or an appendix to corporate and strategic plans. Now, it is more important than ever that planners and policymakers act responsibly and take environmental concerns seriously in all future decisions about Scotland's beautiful and unique landscape.

**Jane Miller is a Policy Officer with Children in Scotland**

> Read the full report online at [childreninscotland.org.uk](http://childreninscotland.org.uk)

> Find out more about the work and responsibilities of the Crown Estate in Scotland at [crownestatescotland.com](http://crownestatescotland.com)

> Images: Consultation participants (left); young people share their thoughts about the environment (below)





# Scottish Nature Photography Awards 2019



^ Junior Scottish Nature Photographer of the Year 2019: Max Eve (age 14) - Glen Etive



^ Anna Turner (age 15) *Morning Report* Junior category, 2nd place



^ Andrew Bulloch (age 17) *Buachaille Dawn* Taken at Glen Etive in the Scottish Highlands. Junior category, 3rd place

v Graham Niven *Volcano Awakens* Environmental category, 2nd place



A 14-year-old has been named as the Junior Scottish Nature Photographer of the Year, winning the title with a stunning image of Glen Etive, in the Scottish Highlands.

The annual Scottish Nature Photographer of the Year awards are made up of eight categories including wildlife portrait, wildlife behaviour, Scottish landscape (land), Scottish landscape (coast and sea), Scottish landscape (urban greenspace), Scottish botanical, natural abstract, and the environment. Winners in each of these compete to be crowned Scottish Nature Photographer of the Year.

They also recognise a Junior Photographer of the Year (under 18) and Scottish Student Photographer of the Year.

Winner of the Junior Scottish Nature Photographer of the Year 2019 (under-18s) was named as Max Eve, from Northumberland. Max, who was 14 years old when he captured his winning image Glen Etive, also won the title in 2015. Anna Turner, 15, and Andrew Balloch, 17, were also both commended for their entries in the under-18 category.

Winning and shortlisted images from across the awards will be displayed in a Portfolio Yearbook, to be published in the summer.

> To find out more, visit [scottishnaturephotographyawards.com](http://scottishnaturephotographyawards.com)



Lead comment

# "Climate change is not an abstract or far away problem"



@strathearnrose

We need to act for the future of our next generations and Scotland's history of innovation could lead the way, writes *Roseanna Cunningham*

As the world pulls together to fight the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the immediate efforts of the Scottish Government – and governments around the world – are focussed on saving lives and protecting public health.

At the time of writing, more than one million people have been infected worldwide and, sadly, large numbers have died. I would like to extend my sympathy to anyone who has lost loved ones, and also to thank you for your efforts, whether that is taking part in essential work, or simply saving lives by staying at home.

When we are in the middle of such an unprecedented situation, it is easy to forget what the normal world looks like. But when the COVID-19 pandemic is brought under control our focus will return to other priorities, and for the Scottish Government there are few greater than the need to tackle the global climate emergency.

There is no doubt that the world has woken up in the last two years. There is a realisation of the need to act.

A growing international movement is pushing for change, and this movement is led by children and young people. The sight of thousands of young people taking to the streets in cities across the world last year was an inspiration to many and has acted as a catalyst to change how we think about the climate.

Children will have to live with the consequences of what we do, or more worryingly, don't do now.

Scotland has made real progress in reducing emissions. In the last 30 years our greenhouse

gas emissions have almost halved. The energy sector is now 83% carbon neutral and the waste sector is 73% carbon neutral. In the last two years, we've recycled more than we've sent to landfill.

These are all encouraging signs, but we must continue to act.

Climate change is not an abstract, distant or far away problem. We are already seeing the impacts right here on our doorstep, with a trend towards warmer winters and hotter summers. Across the world people are experiencing more extreme weather events, such as droughts and violent storms. Flooding is impacting on communities throughout the UK with increasing severity and coastal communities in low-lying parts of the globe are being threatened by rising sea levels.

The Scottish Government recognises that we have a moral responsibility to act. That is why First Minister Nicola Sturgeon declared a climate emergency last year.

This declaration has kick-started a sea-change in the way we are approaching the business of government. The climate emergency now influences everything we do, and its influence is clear in our most recent Programme for Government and Budget.

Since the First Minister's declaration the Scottish Parliament has passed a new Climate Change Act. This commits Scotland to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030. In addition, we have a legally binding target for Scotland to be a net-zero emitter of all greenhouse gases by 2045. This commitment is one of the most ambitious in the world and is a demonstration of how seriously we take the issue.

Ending Scotland's contribution to climate change is a national endeavour, but we must ensure that no one is left behind. Our approach to tackling climate change is rooted in the principles of just transition. This means that we not only reduce emissions, but do so in a way that also tackles inequality and poverty, and makes sure that the significant changes we will see will not adversely impact on any groups in our society.

The scale of the challenge means difficult decisions have to be made. For example we have decided not to allow licenses for fracking to take place in Scotland, and have committed to phase out the need for petrol and diesel cars by 2032.

Our Green New Deal includes planned investment in improved bus infrastructure, the world's first zero emissions aviation region in the Highlands and islands, and plans to de-carbonise the railways by 2035.

Biodiversity will play a key role in our efforts to build a net-zero future. Scotland is already contributing more than our projected share of UK tree planting targets, with 22 million planted in 2018-19. This year, we aim to plant 12,000 hectares of woodland.

Scotland's peatlands provide a vast natural sink of CO2 if left undisturbed and I am absolutely passionate about its protection and restoration. We will continue to protect this valuable resource and have committed to investing, more than £250 million to restore peatlands over 10 years.

The decision to postpone the Glasgow COP26 UN climate summit was entirely unavoidable. Given the global health and economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that hosting an international conference in November would be difficult if not impossible. The decision to postpone also means that much needed resources can be focussed on the immediate task of saving lives and protecting the economy.

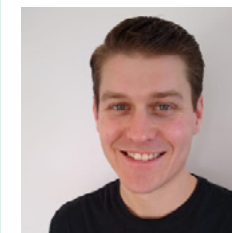
The Scottish Government remains committed to supporting Glasgow as host of COP26. When the time is right, we look forward to welcoming delegates to a successful COP26, that sets the world on course to net-zero in a way that is fair and just. Scotland has a proud record of invention and ingenuity. Just as we helped to lead the world into the industrial revolution, I am convinced we can play a prominent role in leading the world towards a zero-carbon future.

It is the responsibility of all nations to play their part, and Scotland will continue to do so.

**Roseanna Cunningham is the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform**

> Find out more about the Scottish Government's approach to tackling climate change at: [gov.scot/policies/climate-change/](https://gov.scot/policies/climate-change/)

## A bold new world



*David Mackay on recognising the environment as a priority for Children in Scotland*

As Roseanna Cunningham highlights, the world is finally recognising the urgency of the climate crisis. Children and young people's contribution to raising the profile of the climate emergency has been undeniable. The Fridays for Future school strikes have seen young people across the world taking to the streets to challenge politicians, corporations and wider society to take action. Scotland is no exception, with school pupils and volunteer groups including the Scottish Youth Climate Strike and the 2050 Climate Group campaigning for a sustainable future.

At Children in Scotland, climate change has rapidly become one of our key priorities. Air pollution featured as part of our 25 Calls campaign and tackling the climate crisis was one of four key themes in our 2019 UK General Election Manifesto. This focus has emerged in response to feedback from members and from our children and young people's advisory group, Changing Our World, who identified the climate emergency as one of their 'hot topics'. Taking a strong stance on climate issues is also closely aligned to our values as an organisation.

This relatively new focus has presented us with some challenges. Children in Scotland is used to talking about a range of issues affecting children and young people including children's rights, poverty and inequality and housing and food insecurity. The climate crisis has, at times, felt outside our sphere of knowledge and expertise. But new partnerships, evidence-based responses, and the voices of children and young people have inspired us and shown us the way.

Our role in leading the children's sector on this issue is an important one. Against a backdrop of high child poverty, and other challenges facing children, young people and their families, the climate crisis can feel like an impossibly big topic, lost when the focus is supporting families to simply make it through the day. However, it is important to remember it is one of the most pressing issues facing our society today and one that will impact us all in some way. We can already see, across the globe, that those affected by inequality are likely to be the most negatively affected by climate change. At its heart, this is a social justice issue.

While it is clear from the 2019-2020 Programme for Government and the Scottish Budget that the environmental agenda is a key focus for the Scottish Government, questions remain if the positive steps they are taking are radical enough. When the next United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) takes place, it will be a platform to deliver the change we need to see across the globe. As children and young people have shown us, when it comes to tackling the climate crisis, we need to be bold, we need to listen to the science, and everyone needs to play their part.

**David Mackay is Children in Scotland's Policy and Projects Manager**

*"At its heart, this is a social justice issue"*



# Environment vs economy: Do we need a radical redesign?

Commercial success in our modern global economy is largely down to rapid, unchecked growth, but too often at the expense of the environment and sustainable development. With resources fast depleting, an entirely new approach may be required that supports young people's prospects.

Three experts in the field share their thoughts on ways forward.



**Joe Cameron**  
Engagement &  
Information Assistant  
2050 Climate Group

> The 2050 Climate Group is a youth-led charity empowering young people to act on climate change. [2050.scot](https://2050.scot)

@2050ClimateGrp

In short; yes. But there is nothing radical about reimagining an economy that serves people and the planet before profit.

Simply put, we need the world's ecosystems to survive for us to stay alive and our current economic system is destroying them. Constant growth on a finite planet will only last so long. For the economy and environment to work together we must reshape what our economy stands for. We need to change 'business as usual' and perhaps the meaning of business itself.

The economy has been and can be a catalyst for positive change, but we need to redesign it and set its parameters. Instead of measuring success and 'progress' with Gross Domestic Product (GDP), we can look to Bhutan with its Gross Domestic Happiness (GDH) barometer for inspiration. A suitable solution can be realised in the creation of 'wellbeing economies' that flip the business model where the bottom line of business is now concerned with serving people and the planet – not simply profit. This concept is, excitingly, starting to take root here in Scotland alongside New Zealand and Iceland.

But what does a wellbeing economy look like? For Nicola Sturgeon it has equal pay, the happiness of children, mental health, access to green space and access to housing at its centre.

The Wellbeing Economy Alliance identifies five pillars that constitute one:

1. Dignity
2. Nature
3. Connection & Sense of Belonging
4. Fairness
5. Participation

These fundamentals are the makings of a sustainable, just society. One where wealth is measured by health. Instead of economic growth fuelled by profit, we have technological and social progress combined with holistic environmental policies. It is with these principles that we can form and create an economy that works for and provides a base for a society built on a mutually beneficial system, with people and the planet at its core.



**Caroline Rance**  
Climate and Energy  
Campaigner  
Friends of the Earth

> Friends of the Earth campaigns for socially just solutions to environmental problems. [foe.scot](https://foe.scot)

@FoEScot

For the past 40 years our economy has put growth and profit above all else.

In doing so, we have created a deeply unequal society, leading us towards climate and biodiversity breakdown.

Climate change is a result of the free market system where businesses are not held responsible for the negative impacts of their economic activity, even when the costs to society and nature are enormous.

The actions of a wealthy few have devastating consequences. Just 100 companies are responsible for 70% of global climate emissions. The richest 10% of the world's people are responsible for half of all global emissions. The poorest half are responsible for just 10%... The injustice is that those who have done the least to cause the climate crisis are hit hardest. They are also least able to adapt to climate change or survive climate disasters.

Climate justice means seeking to redress this imbalance. That means we must reject free market 'solutions' to climate change, such as carbon trading or technological fixes, that do nothing to address the underlying drivers. It means not only changing the source of our energy from fossil fuels to renewables, but changing the system. The pace and scale of change needed to tackle the climate crisis requires a radically different and more ambitious approach. We urgently need to reprogramme the economy to a system which meets the needs of everyone in society, within the means of the planet.

The transition to a zero-carbon economy in Scotland should not leave anyone behind. We are working with trade unions to demand a Just Transition, one that protects workers and communities who currently rely on jobs in high carbon industries. We are also calling on the Scottish Government to write a new Economic Strategy for Scotland that puts a Just Transition to a zero-carbon economy at its core. It should invest in climate and environment measures while striving for the wellbeing of all its citizens.

For a better future for children in Scotland, and around the world, we have no choice. We must build a new economic system that puts people and planet first, and a fairer society that ensures a safe and dignified life for everyone within environmental limits.



**George Tarvit**  
Director  
Sustainable Scotland  
Network

> The Sustainable Scotland Network exists to support and accelerate public sector action on climate change. [sustainable-scotlandnetwork.org](https://sustainable-scotlandnetwork.org)

@SSNScotland

For Scotland's public sector the environment and the economy are inextricably linked. It is critical to reframe the debate.

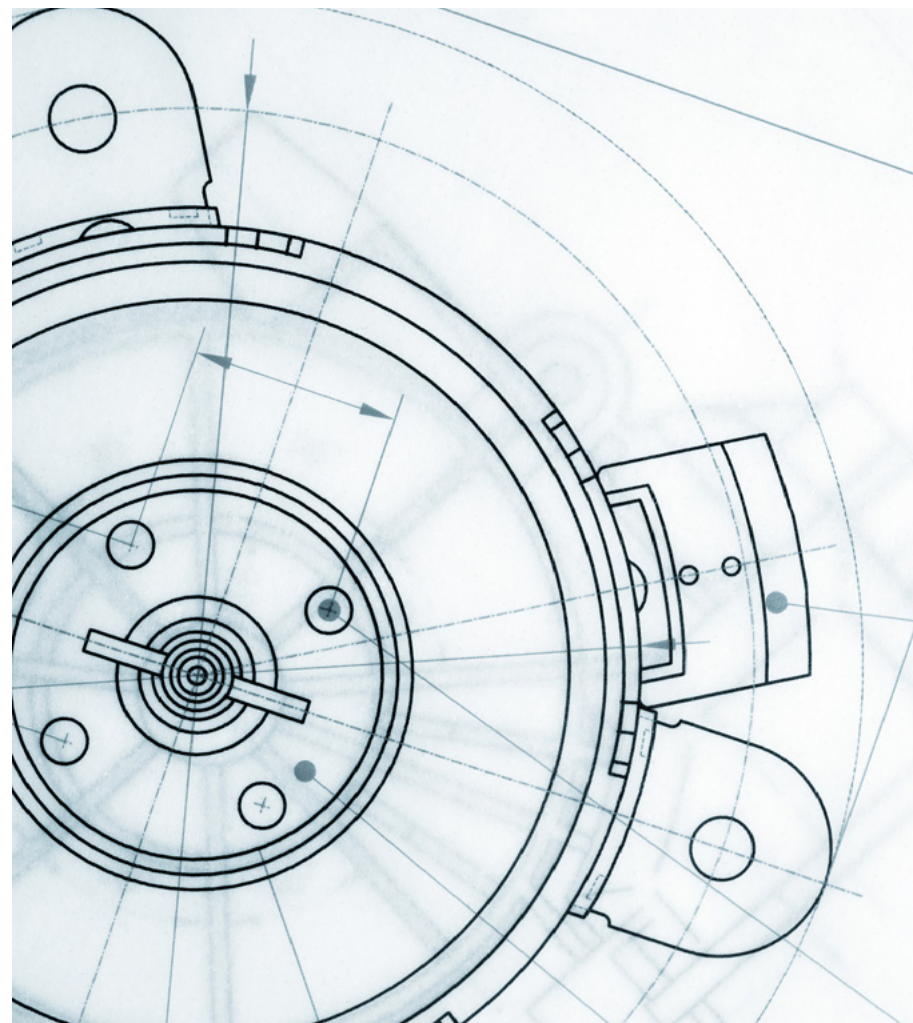
Sustainability is just as much a responsibility as helping economic development, supporting jobs, and helping people stay healthy and well. Local authorities are legally bound by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 which imposes duties on each to promote sustainable development. More broadly, all public bodies are duty bound under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to a changing climate, and act sustainably.

The challenge of sustainable development is an economic one – not an environmental one. Some of our most pressing sustainability challenges are because we have failed to re-orientate economic development towards sustainability. Our economies don't account for the full costs of economic activity and can appear healthy while undermining the very resources and clean environments on which we all ultimately depend.

We face an inescapable need to integrate sustainability outcomes into economic theory and practice. We need to transition from unsustainable to sustainable activities, protecting and promoting the welfare and wellbeing of our people. It requires us to be creative and heroic in steering economic development towards sustainable development goals. And it requires us to make the economy work better for all, recognising that people are part of nature, and both personal and economic wellbeing fundamentally depend on a healthy, sustainable and flourishing environment.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon delivered a 2019 TED Talk outlining her commitment to a 'wellbeing economy' aimed at achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Scottish Government has developed a National Performance Framework which helps align the whole public sector towards sustainable development outcomes. These are positive developments but there is a long way to go, and little time, to see the economy re-engineered towards sustainable development. We know from mounting evidence that this is the only real option available, if we are to avoid the increasing costs of ongoing unsustainable economic growth.

> Image: istockphoto ©teekid





## Call 25

# Cut cars from schools to boost active travel and reduce pollution

As part 25 Calls, Sustrans Scotland's *Alex Quayle* called for change at the school gates. He said:

**T**he chaotic scene of cars jostling to drop children off for school will be familiar to many. We believe it is unsafe, unhealthy, and unnecessary.

A YouGov survey, carried out for Sustrans in spring 2018, polled more than 1,000 children aged five to 16 and found that less than one in four children wanted to be dropped off by car near the school gates. More than half wanted to travel actively; on foot, by bike or by scooter. Troublingly, however, 39 per cent of children identified traffic as a barrier to walking or cycling to school.

Cars around the school gates are a key reason why more parents or guardians choose the car for the journey to school. But, each car only increases safety concerns, meaning more people think they need to drive. We cannot expect change when traffic is only encouraging more cars. But there is a simple solution to this problem – close the road to traffic.

Since 2015, Edinburgh has trialled closed roads around primary schools for drop-off and pick-up. Results are promising. There was an immediate reduction in cars around school gates. More children were allowed to walk as the road closures tackled two of the biggest factors for parents and guardians: dangerous parking and fast traffic. Some schools, those that decreased traffic by the most, saw walking increase by up to 10-12 per cent.

It gets better. Motor vehicles are responsible for as much as 80 per cent of nitrous oxide pollution in urban areas. Nitrous oxide inflames lungs, increases lung infections and respiratory problems, and disproportionately hurts young people. An evaluation of the school street closures by the City of Edinburgh Council showed they resulted in consistently reduced overall nitrous oxide levels, often by more than 50 per cent.

This is not a call for a complete ban on cars around schools. We appreciate that often it may not be practical for children to walk to school as many parents juggle school drop-off with getting to work.

However, schools need to work with parents and guardians to prevent the drop-off moving to a busier road nearby and to ensure that children, parents and caregivers who cannot travel actively are not excluded.

This is a simple, inexpensive and quick measure that is proven to make a difference to road safety, congestion, children's physical activity and air quality. It's time for all of Scotland's local authorities to make this change for children.

**Alex Quayle is Senior Policy Officer at Sustrans Scotland**

## 25 Calls response

# The road to opportunity



@Sheel9

**A terrible virus has given us the gift of clean air. Once it's over we must change our policy on pollution, writes *Shelagh Young***

**T**he immediate risk to life from the respiratory problems caused by Covid-19 has triggered protective action led by governments on a scale unimaginable just a few months ago. Quite right too. Perhaps now our leaders will also realise the need to provide support to the thousands suffering lifelong respiratory problems and early deaths caused by air pollution, who are disproportionately represented among the homeless population, those receiving social care, and poorer families, as measured by Michael Marmot of the Institute of Health Equity.

When it comes to road traffic we are a nation of sociopathic Mr Toads, recklessly enjoying the freedom, convenience and presumed economic benefits of cars and lorries no matter the long-term consequences.

Action to achieve cleaner air is one of Children in Scotland's 25 calls in its campaign to change children's lives for the better. Sustrans Scotland (left) calls for preventing school drop-offs by car.

Last year, a study of more than 2000 children in London showed we were raising a generation of children with stunted lung capacity. We already know the link between poor air quality and low birth weights, cot deaths, obesity and poor mental health. It is also well established that road traffic is the main cause of air pollution, with many engines emitting nitrogen dioxide and tiny particles, both of which are significant threats to lifelong health.

We have real and current evidence of what a difference reducing road traffic makes to air quality in our towns and cities, with significant reductions in nitrogen dioxide levels and the emission of tiny particles – two of the most harmful vehicle engine related pollutants.

It is time for children and families-focused agencies to stop behaving as if environmental issues were somebody else's business. By joining forces with the environmental movement we would achieve so much more in terms of making Scotland the best place for children to grow up in.

According to Friends of the Earth there are 38 official Pollution Zones in Scotland's towns and cities where our air quality usually falls below agreed safety standards. In 2017 Greenpeace revealed there were more than 1000 nurseries looking after 47,000 babies and young children close to roads in England and Wales where the levels of nitrogen dioxide exceeds legal limits.

At the end of March Scotland's councils were released from their legal obligation to double free childcare provision during the crisis sparked by the pandemic. Up till now they had been busy growing nursery care close to where people live. This sounds great until you think about what that might mean for children. Some of Scotland's most densely populated areas also typically have the dirtiest air. Let's hope local authorities have a rethink and use all available evidence, including air pollution maps, to inform their next steps.

This massive public health challenge is clearly an equalities issue. Researchers have said that doctors should consider advising parents of children with lung problems, such as asthma, to avoid living in high pollution areas. Fat chance of this for our most disadvantaged families.

Scotland is set to phase out "the need" for petrol and diesel cars by 2032. Only Westminster has the power to ban sales and,



**"Scotland is set to phase out 'the need' for petrol and diesel cars by 2032. But only Westminster has the power to ban sales"**

although it has brought that deadline forward to 2035, this will not stop people driving older petrol, diesel and hybrid vehicles. Sales bans on new vehicles might sound radical but measured in terms of children's lives 2035 is more than 750,000 newborn Scottish babies away. Worse still, as Friends of the Earth's Gavin Thomson has pointed out in another response to Sustrans' call, generally the older the vehicle the worse the pollution.

In the 1950s so-called pea-souper fogs in London and other cities caused 12,000 premature deaths. Major change came about through the Clean Air Act. Now that 40,000 premature deaths are estimated to result from preventable air pollution, we need similar game-changing measures.

When it comes to invisible air pollution out of sight should not mean out of mind. As a result of the global pandemic people are spending less time on the roads. As awful as this crisis is, it has delivered a gift of cleaner air. The challenge now is to keep it that way. Anything less is nowhere near getting it right for every child.

**Shelagh Young is a freelance writer and consultant**

> This is an updated version of an article first published on our website last year as part of the 25 Calls series of blog responses.

> Visit the [25 Calls campaign site](#) to read the original calls and further responses.

> Read [Michael Marmot's Health Equity report](#) *Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On*



Project

# Climate-ready classrooms

A fully accredited environmental education programme is giving teachers the confidence to discuss environmental issues and preparing young people to take action on climate change. *Daniel Barrie* explains more



Climate change is one of the defining issues of our time. Our planet is getting warmer and our climate is changing – with dire consequences for flora and fauna, as well as for people. Our weather is becoming more extreme and unpredictable resulting in droughts, wildfires and flooding and the ecosystems and infrastructure that we depend on are being damaged.

The science behind climate change and the steps we should all take to reduce our carbon footprint can be daunting. Yet our experience has shown us that the more people know about climate change, the more likely they are to feel motivated and empowered to address it.

The Youth Climate Strike movement has evidenced a real appetite for change from young people whose future is under significant threat.

**“75% of teachers do not feel equipped to tackle climate change in the classroom”**

Keep Scotland Beautiful has been working with Scotland's young people on the environment and climate change through the world-leading Eco-Schools programme for more than 25 years. We have heard first-hand about the issues young people and educators care about and need more information on. Climate change is one of them.

Alarming, research shows that up to three-quarters of UK teachers do not feel equipped to tackle this issue in the classroom. There is also evidence that enthusiasm for learning about our environment drops off among secondary pupils aged 14-17, particularly those in deprived areas.

With this in mind, we developed a fun, hands-on one-day workshop, accredited by the Carbon Literacy Project, to capture the imagination of secondary school pupils and harness the passion

they have shown through climate strikes. With funding from the Scottish Government, our Climate Ready Classrooms workshops were piloted, along with teacher training, in late 2018/early 2019 with input from Young Scot and members of the 2050 Climate Group.

Climate Ready Classrooms was piloted with 13 schools in nine local authority areas where we felt the workshop could make the biggest difference amongst the least engaged young people.

By March 2019, it had been tested by over 200 young people and 18 education practitioners. Following the workshops, 100% of participants confirmed that the workshop had significantly improved their understanding of climate change and low carbon actions and increased their confidence to spread the word at school and in their community.

*“The whole-day workshops incorporated active learning, detracting from the normal school working day and enthusing a new generation of learners in battling carbon emissions.” Teacher*

*“Originally [I thought] The Carbon Literacy Day was going to be boring and a waste of time, but I was wrong. It turned out to be a fun, interactive but educational day.” Pupil*

In late 2019, following the success of the pilot, we were asked by the Scottish Government to roll out the Climate Ready Classrooms project, the first accredited workshop of its kind in the UK, to half of all Scotland's secondary schools by March 2021.

Making the funding announcement in August 2019, Education Secretary John Swinney called the initiative “hugely important as it aims to enhance the existing opportunities for young people to learn more about climate change in the classroom.” He also called learning to live sustainably an “entitlement for our learners” and urged schools to take up the opportunity.

**So, how does it work?**

Climate Ready Classrooms is an accredited Carbon Literacy training course for secondary schools. It has been designed for young people aged 14-17 years, along with their teachers, head teachers, CLD practitioners and youth and children's workers.

Delivered by our trained facilitators, up to 25 pupils participate in a one-day workshop while teachers take part in a ‘train-the-trainer’ workshop, helping them to deliver the programme in their own school. The course aims to give schools the confidence and tools to make small changes in their everyday lives and encourages them to join a national network of carbon literate ambassadors who plan and pledge to act on climate change issues within their own schools and communities.

A legacy target for the initiative is a pool of teaching talent that is appropriately skilled in inspiring and focusing the next generation on the environmental challenge in front of us, as well as how to overcome it.

As of February 2020, we have already successfully delivered workshops to 11% of local authority schools. At completion, we anticipate 5,000 young people being

**Support to deliver**

The Climate Ready Classroom project will support participating schools to:

- Adapt a whole school approach to climate action, creating meaningful hands-on learning opportunities.
- Reduce the carbon footprint.
- Create a network of connections, including supporting young people towards future employment.
- Support planning for choices and change through the Curriculum for Excellence.
- Develop STEM skills and support the developing workforce.
- Develop evidence which can support an application for an Eco-Schools Scotland Green Flag.

On completion, schools will also receive an accredited certificate of Carbon Literacy.



accredited and a legacy network of over 500 trained trainers being in place.

Climate change is the biggest environmental challenge we face. Although the 2020 UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) scheduled to come to Scotland later this year has now been postponed, we should still view the international gathering as an opportunity across the country to intensify climate conversations and stimulate increased action when it does reconvene.

Climate Ready Classrooms is a timely cog in a huge wheel helping people understand the part they have to play in tackling the climate crisis.

**“The more people know about climate change, the more they feel empowered to address it”**

**Daniel Barrie is Education and Learning Manager with Keep Scotland Beautiful**

> Find out more about the Climate Ready Classroom programme at [keepsotlandbeautiful.org/climate-ready](https://www.KeepScotlandBeautiful.org/climate-ready)

> “The programme really engaged young people” Read the case study from Bannockburn High School, **Page 26**

> All images provided by Keep Scotland Beautiful



**Case study: Bannockburn High School****“The programme really engaged young people and encouraged them to reflect on how they could act locally, but think globally”****In March, pupils and teachers at Bannockburn High School in Stirling experienced Climate Ready Classrooms first-hand**

The high school has been involved in Eco-Schools since 2016 and currently holds a Green Flag – the top accolade. The pupils who participated, all girls ranging from S2 to S5, were not from the Eco-Club, yet all put themselves forward to take part in the workshop because the issue of climate change was important to them.

Jayne Hamilton, Eco-Schools Co-ordinator at the high school said: “The programme really engaged our young people and encouraged them to reflect and evaluate their own carbon footprint and how they could act locally but think globally. I would recommend this to any school no matter where they are in their Eco-Schools journey as a way to embed the ethos of Learning for Sustainability in the curriculum.”

Using visual, interactive activities, participants were encouraged to envisage and appreciate the impact of human activity on the natural world, and what they can do to combat the problem.

In Carbon Jenga, small groups build a tower with colour coded blocks to represent the natural world, and then read out cards detailing human impact on Earth. They then add blocks representing human activity, such as shipping, transportation, energy usage or manufacturing, and remove blocks from the tower, due to deforestation, overfishing, or pollution. This activity demonstrates, in a fun and visual way, that by removing blocks from the original, natural tower, and adding more blocks onto the top, we are creating an instable and imbalanced environment. Students are asked to predict outcomes – usually that the tower will fall – and are asked to come up with solutions to the problem throughout the activity.

Pupils also participated in a Walk the Walk activity, demonstrating how a carbon footprint can vary. Participants start off on the same base line and answer questions relating to their carbon footprint by stepping forward. Questions focus on energy, food and diet, transport, and consumption and aim to roughly capture and demonstrate lifestyle impacts and how small alterations to individual habits can create a positive difference. Walk the Walk encourages discussion and debate encouraging peer learning.

Alyssa Morgan, a participant, said, “I really enjoyed the Climate Ready Classrooms workshop, because I’m really passionate about our planet and climate change. I also appreciate that it goes toward a certificate I can show in applications in the future. I am grateful to have had the chance to learn more about carbon emissions and to talk to, and teach, others.

“This workshop has given me a lot of hope for the future as well as a feeling of power that I alone can change the condition of my home.”

Not only did the pupils learn about climate change on the day of the workshop, but the messages were shared through the school eco-club and pupils’ social media accounts to wider audiences – hopefully recruiting a few more active supporters to take local action to combat the global climate crisis we are all facing.

*Image: Pupils play Carbon Jenga*

**People**

# Scotland’s Climate Champions

In February, three Scottish schools won seats at the prestigious Hunter Foundation annual dinner after submitting their ideas for addressing climate change. The successful schools – Denny High School, Perth Grammar and George Heriot’s – tell us more about their recommendations.

**Climate Champions: Perth Grammar School****“If you’re not uncomfortable, you’re not listening”**

**Junior pupils from Perth Grammar share some of their ideas for change, and why adults need to listen to the next generation**

It all started with an email. Hearing of the opportunity to submit an entry to the “Climate Champions” competition brought students from all year groups together, hopeful for the chance to meet Sir David Attenborough.

We made our film – and won. Our video showed that it should be young people taking the lead. Adults have had their chance to act, but they have let it slide. Now it is their turn to listen.

When our meetings started our numbers were relatively small but as time went by, more and more people came. Throughout the school we’ve watched as changes started to take place: we have planted trees within the grounds, we have worked with the Council to have our recycling system upgraded and we’ve started to hold up-cycling stations in one of the school rooms. We are also taking part in local community clean-ups to improve litter.

As a school and as individuals we know how serious climate change is and are in disbelief that people are still oblivious to

what is happening, even when Australia is burning and the glaciers are melting.

We needed the attention of the older generation. We know that no matter how many changes are made that the full effects of climate change can never be reversed. It is heart-breaking to think that in 100 years there may be no wildlife at all.

But we also know that everyone can make small changes that will make a difference.

For example, using re-usable cups and containers, walking to places instead of getting a bus or driving. These are all easy changes to make, but still not enough people are doing it.

Everybody can do something. As individuals we can all make changes but for us to see a real and motivating change it’s people in power, people who make the policies and those running the big companies that really have to take the lead. And that is why we talk about attitude and action. We know that there are solutions out there and we need to be taught about them.

Some of the most well-known companies are the biggest polluters. Something needs to be done by these people – introduce new laws that will make everybody change their ways. Plastic tax for example: charge extra money for the plastic that gets wasted. Promote a circular economy that focuses on creating and re-using sustainable materials which don’t pollute our world.

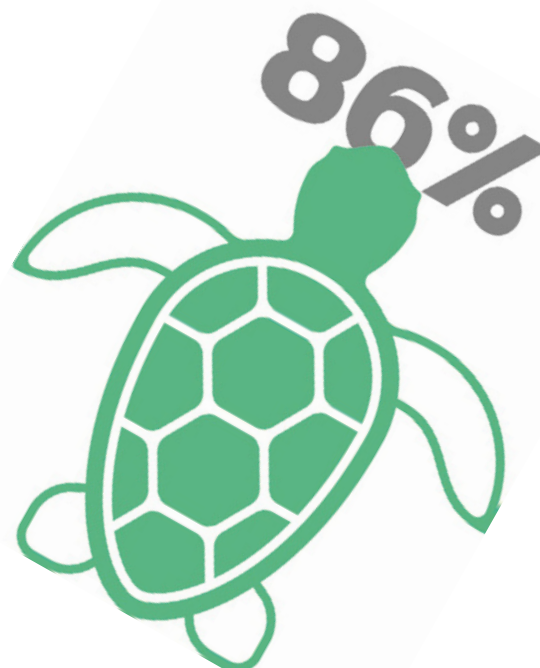
The world’s waste is a huge problem. As much as people recycle, the total sum only comes to around 14%. That means approximately 86% of waste goes to landfill or ends up in our oceans, killing our marine life who are digesting toxic amounts of waste. This is not good enough and it never will be.

We all know how important the world is. There is only one – yet we are still letting it burn, melt and die.

Things need to be changed. People must be educated.

Hopefully we can make a difference.

**“People are still oblivious to what is happening”**





## "Five simple steps to save our planet"

Pupils from Denny High School, Falkirk, tell us more about their idea of themed days, observed and encouraged by schools, to reduce the growing pressure on our planet.

Our future is in our hands. But we need to act urgently. We were introduced to the Hunter Foundation and Zero Waste Scotland competition by our STEM teachers Mr and Mrs Sharp. We jumped at the chance to enter because we are very enthusiastic and passionate about climate change. We also loved the idea of bringing a creative twist to deliver the message. We felt this helped people to engage in the topic, understand the urgency of climate change and see how it is affecting not only adults but also the young generation growing up in this world.

'Do it days' is an idea that struck us like lightning after a thunderstorm of ideas. It stood out from our other ideas because it was simple, memorable and most importantly - achievable.

**Meatfree Mondays:** On Mondays, people will not eat meat to help reduce gas emissions from the over-production of farming animals.

**Turn-off Tuesdays:** On Tuesdays, all lights and unnecessary electronics will be switched off to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Walking Wednesdays:** On Wednesdays, everyone will walk to school to reduce transport-related fossil fuel consumption.

**No Throw-Away Thursdays:** On Thursdays, all single use plastics will be banned and only renewable materials which can be washed and reused repeatedly will be permitted.

**Fruity Fridays:** On Fridays, schools will serve healthy and fruity meal options which use locally sourced ingredients. This will reduce fossil fuel consumption and emissions.

Our video is an animation to engage all age groups in the 'do it days' message about saving our beloved planet.

We couldn't believe it when we won! We were bursting with so many emotions: disbelief, excitement, happiness and pride. Our passion, determination and hard work had paid off and we felt that we were really making a difference to our future.

For our prize we attended the annual Hunter Foundation's charity dinner with Sir David Attenborough as guest speaker on Tuesday 18th February. In the foyer we spotted some famous faces. We got to chat (and take a selfie) with Sean Batty, the STV weatherman!

The night was truly inspirational and one we will never forget. The evening was introduced by Sir Tom Hunter, then Matt Baker interviewed Sir David Attenborough. The conversation was fascinating and hard-hitting, with lots of evidence of how we're destroying our planet and the action needed now. Sir David's key message was that we all need to do our little bit to make the greatest difference to our planet's future. We loved listening to his stories and anecdotes. Then all the guests, including Sir David Attenborough, watched our 'Do it Days' animation. After dinner, we were entertained by violinist, Nicola Benedetti. It was an amazing night.

We are grateful to the Hunter Foundation and Zero Waste Scotland for giving us this opportunity and for helping us to share our message.

These five simple steps could save our planet. Five suggestions that everyone can get involved in to help make a difference.

Now we know what we have to do – let's just do it!

**"We all need to do our little bit to make the greatest difference to our planet's future"**

## "All our recommendations are achievable"

Senior pupils from George Heriot's School, Edinburgh, tell us about their recommended initiatives for schools, along with an annual environmental sustainability conference.

"When we heard about the competition we wanted to enter to help raise awareness about climate change and use it as a catalyst for change. We think more should be done to help mitigate climate change but also it was a once in a lifetime opportunity for us to meet Sir David Attenborough!

To prepare our submission we spoke with others around the school. The Environmental Action Research Team at Heriots (E.A.R.T.H) meet weekly, and their input into the project was fundamental. In addition, we also canvassed peers by brainstorming in our S6 Geography class.

The result was a series of initiatives we recommend be rolled out in schools across Scotland, alongside an annual environmental sustainability conference which will allow collation of ideas and feedback on progress of implementation of themed initiatives.

Our initiatives are subdivided into six categories covering: energy, waste, transport, fashion and textiles, and school grounds. All, we believe, are manageable and achievable.

We are aware that with many constraints on school/ education budgets at the current time we must make any targets or measures financially accessible but believe many of these could be achieved with little or no additional cost, with all bringing long-term benefits which far outweigh any initial financial outlay.

**"Long-term benefits far outweigh any initial financial outlay"**

Free bus passes for school children, for example, would encourage increased use of public transport to and from school. There is of course an initial cost to the government but the long-term benefits are immeasurable. If everyone going to school used the bus, imagine the (positive) impact on carbon emissions!

A second easy and low-cost initiative would be to stop the sale of single use bottles and cans in all schools – we have the best water on the planet. Use of reusable bottles for tap water is a no-brainer.

The staff at George Heriot's have taken on board our recommendations and in the summer term we will be meeting with key management personnel in the school to begin our first stage of preparation.

Change is coming, and we are pleased to be leading the way.



### We want to see:

#### Energy Use

- **Government grants for solar panels and wind turbines for schools** to fuel school energy, with any excess energy then sold to the grid. We understand this would need to be in line with building regulations, and would seek advice from Scottish National Heritage.

#### Waste

- **Food waste from canteens used to fuel biodigesters**, creating heat energy for the school and an energy source to cook with. It emulates what is already happening in the favelas of Rio.
- We are pleased to see the deposit return scheme coming to Scotland which would encourage pupils to recycle to receive money back and discount vouchers at the canteen. **Reverse vending machines should be put in every school.**

#### Food & Drink

- **Products should be sourced from local producers**, including seasonal produce with limited packaging and no palm oil.
- **Stop the sale of single use bottles and cans** in all schools.
- **Introduce a Meat Free Monday** for school menus and packed lunches.

#### Transport

Generally, public transport needs to be made more accessible and cheap. Specifically:

- **Consider charging points in school and public places for electric bikes and scooters** – promoting healthy lifestyles.
- **Introduce free bus passes** for all school children and parents to encourage more bus use.

#### Fashion and textiles

- **Create a thrift shop on the school grounds for swapping and reusing items** e.g. school uniform plus other events to swap unwanted clothes or Christmas presents.
- We need the Government to ensure large-scale, low price retailers such as Primark and other clothes shops have limited collections per year and reduce waste.

#### School grounds

- **Instigate a National Tree Planting Day for schools.** Perhaps pupils, and staff, could plant trees then have a vegan lunch.



**M | Tu | W | Th | F**



Introducing....

# "Balance is what is needed to preserve our planet"

Award-winning dietician Nigel Denby, one of the experts behind the new Plot to Plate Club run by our childcare project CHANGE, tells us more about the link between good nutrition and good health, the importance of preserving the food chain and how to protect the planet by balancing our food intake appropriately. *Interview by Jennifer Drummond*



**Nigel Denby**  
Dietician, Author  
and Broadcaster

> Find out more about the Plot to Plate club via the CHANGE website  
[change-childcare.org/news/](https://change-childcare.org/news/)

> CHANGE is a project working to create better childcare for communities in the East of Glasgow. Children in Scotland is a core partner along with Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Centre for Population Health and the community. Find out more on our project pages  
[childreninscotland.org.uk/change-childcare-and-nurture-glasgow-east/](https://childreninscotland.org.uk/change-childcare-and-nurture-glasgow-east/)

**The food chain is the cornerstone of good nutrition and in turn good health.** If links within the chain become insecure or broken there is a knock-on effect which tends to be most severe for the most vulnerable people in society.

**Access to good food is more difficult in the most deprived areas.**

The proliferation of fast food outlets and independent convenience stores makes it the norm to rely on cheap, pre-prepared food of low nutritional value. This in turn fuels a loss of any tangible connection between food, the environment, and personal or public health. If food is seen as something cheap and disposable it doesn't take long for health to carry the same value.

**Plot to Plate Club is a community project specifically aimed at helping families access better food.** The club combines growing, harvesting, cooking and eating food in a structured programme over six, four-hour sessions. The sessions are led by growing experts Greenheart Growers, myself and fellow dietitian Jeanann Andrews.

**The founders of Plot to Plate Club were originally brought together through CHANGE: Childcare and Nurture Glasgow East** who have been hugely supportive in helping develop the Plot to Plate Club network in the North East of Glasgow. Eighteen families had taken part in the Club before the Covid-19 crisis hit – and there are plans to launch more Plot to Plate Club projects when social distancing restrictions ease. The projects have been funded by a range of grants and awards made to schools, nurseries and out of school clubs. The relationship between the Plot to Plate Club and the school, nursery or club is critical in identifying families who would benefit from being part of the project.

**Nutritionists always talk about balance in eating and balance in our food is exactly what's needed to preserve the planet.** We need to balance our intake of vegetable and animal foods and use more vegetable proteins like pulses and nuts. However, we need to keep this in context and not follow diet fads. The world doesn't need to become vegan.

**By building the connection between growing our own food, cooking our own food and eating together, our project hopes to reposition food as something more than fuel.** Our planet is precious, our health is precious. We believe that good healthy food is precious too. Plot to Plate Club is all about helping everyone in our community feel they can contribute to preserving the food chain and in turn can access better health and wellbeing.



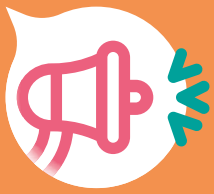
**Next issue: Issue 198, Summer 2020**

Our next issue will be available in early summer.

Want to contribute? Contact [jdrummond@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:jdrummond@childreninscotland.org.uk)

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**During a period of crisis, keep up with Children in Scotland and share your views through our channels:**

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## Weekly Members' News

If you're a member you'll receive our e-bulletin every Thursday with analysis of the pandemic's impact from different members of our staff team and tips for useful resources from Children in Scotland and across the sector.

## Daily News

Our free digest of child policy stories in the media is published every weekday.

If you don't already receive it, [sign up here](#).

## 25 Calls

Our 25 Calls campaign to strengthen rights and equality for children continues, with a topical focus on the impact of Covid-19 on children and families. Responses are published fortnightly.

## Contribute ideas and content



Contact our communications team:  
[press@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:press@childreninscotland.org.uk)



“Preserving  
dignity and rights  
is of  
fundamental  
importance in our  
collective response  
to Covid-19.

Working together,  
we can help support  
every child  
and  
every childhood”

*Jackie Brock, CEO, Children in Scotland* ➤



Make your voice heard:

- > Be part of our network
- > Join us in membership