

Together for a

Fair Climate Future

October 2021



Image: Joe Habben

Sustainability
first

Foreword

Fighting climate change is the challenge of this generation. At the heart of that fight is changing the energy we use every day to zero carbon sources – including changing the energy we use to light and heat our homes and move our cars, trains and buses. Such a vast transformation of energy must include all voices in its design and delivery. Without a diversity of voices and perspectives, we risk slowing the transition and causing greater harm to the planet. The alternative costs to the planet and vulnerable communities would be much higher.

At National Grid, we understand much of the technical transformation. We think it is equally important that we create space for dialogue to consider the societal and community-specific issues, opportunities and risks on the road to a zero-carbon society. Our aim in sponsoring the work summarised in this book is to highlight some of these issues and provide a forum for reflection and discussion to look at the potential solutions we need to design in order to ensure this transition is fair, diverse and equal.

I'd like to congratulate Sustainability First for bringing together such a diverse range of thought-provoking perspectives that has challenged us to think more widely as to how we can play a role in helping deliver that fair and equal low carbon economy. I hope you find this book as interesting and challenging as we do, and I look forward to working with you on this incredibly important journey to a fair low carbon society.

Duncan Burt

COP26 Director, National Grid

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Cover image: Joe Habben

Hangin' in the Balance, 120mm Photographic Film, Mamiya 645, 80mm lens, 2020

Joe's practice explores the tender balance between urban inhabitants and the environment, investigating and questioning our relationship with the natural world. He works to convey opposing themes such as familiarity/unfamiliarity, stillness/movement and harmony/disparity. Joe has been documenting the events and effects of the 'Acqua Alta' (high-water) that transpires annually in the city of Venice, Italy. Tidal activity is a natural occurrence that in recent decades has been aggravated by the effects of human activity, including mass-tourism, global warming, urban expansion and industrialisation. Joe Habben is a photographer, filmmaker and artist based between Glasgow and Brighton, UK. He graduated from the Glasgow School of Art in Communication Design: Photography.

1. Guide to this Book

This virtual book begins with Sustainability First's recommendations for working towards a Fair Climate Future, with a particular UK focus. These proposals draw heavily on recommendations we heard throughout the Together for a Fair Climate Future programme.

The next section of the book is split into four chapters, reflecting key themes emerging from the programme: climate change, its unequal impacts, and fairness; imaginative visions for a fair climate future and the role of art and storytelling; values and how to achieve societal change in the UK; and inclusive, collaborative community and public engagement.

Each chapter shares quotations from speakers across the programme and recommendations from Writing Prize entries. Each chapter can also be downloaded as a standalone article. The book concludes with an outline of Sustainability First's proposals, both during and after COP26 (the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference).

Annex A contains a brief description of the prize-winning and shortlisted Art Prize entries, with artwork images showcased throughout the book. Annex B summarises the prize-winning and shortlisted writing entries, with hyperlinks to the entries. Annex C outlines procedures for the Art and Writing Prizes. Annex D notes our acknowledgements.

Eilidh Guthrie, *Eating Drinking Oil*



2. Introduction

We are in a decisive decade and urgent action is vital to avoid hazardous climate tipping points. In the UK we have a target to meet net zero carbon emissions by 2050 (2045 in Scotland) – which means balancing the carbon emissions produced and those removed from the atmosphere. This ambition must be supported with policies and action to deliver widescale change at pace. The UK is hosting the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP26, in Glasgow in November 2021 – a significant opportunity to show leadership and increase public engagement with the climate crisis.

Sustainability First is a think-tank and charity that works in essential services to promote practical solutions to improve environmental, social and economic well-being. In the lead up to COP26, we have been running the Together for a Fair Climate Future programme that focuses on bringing people in the UK together to act on the climate crisis and social inequality, and to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic in a fair and positive way.

We have worked for many years with policy makers and businesses in these areas. We often hear the same arguments, but without the crucial action needed. We're involving a wide range of people in our work, from across generations and disciplines, activists, artists, writers, schoolchildren, as well as businesses and government – bringing together ideas, knowledge and experience to

deliver positive change. We've heard from stakeholders on the importance of building visions for the future that are optimistic yet honest, arguing that we need to act fast and on a wide scale to build those visions in an equitable manner.

We want to share fresh perspectives and forge new connections between future generations, communities disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis, and decision-makers. We want to build collaborative networks, develop clear, inclusive and engaging dialogues, and encourage practical actions for sustainable change. We are grateful to National Grid for supporting this work, recognising the importance of taking a creative approach to addressing the climate crisis and inequality in society.

This virtual book synthesises the conversations and recommendations stemming from the rich and diverse views we've heard across the programme, which includes discussion events, an interactive conference, an engagement panel to guide our work, educational outreach and artist residencies. This book also showcases entries for the Sustainability First Art and Writing Prizes 2021. This year's theme, Together for a Fair Climate Future focuses on the climate crisis, fairness in society, and how we work together to achieve a sustainable future. We had a great response to both competitions, with over 500 art submissions and 60 written works.

What is COP26?

COP26, the 26th Conference of Parties (COP) on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, hosted by the UK and Italy in Glasgow in November 2021.

The Paris Agreement that was signed in 2015 and entered into force in 2016 committed us to limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius (preferably to 1.5 degrees) higher than pre-industrial levels. COP26 is a vital opportunity for the global community to come together to make commitments to deliver the following four goals:

1. Secure global net zero by mid-century and keep a limit of 1.5 degrees warming within reach
2. Adapt to protect communities and natural habitats
3. Mobilise international finance
4. Work together to accelerate action to address the crisis.

However, the conference is not an end in itself. What happens after COP26 is the important part. In the UK there is an urgent need to match government commitments with action to attain net zero goals.

3. Sustainability First's High-Level Recommendations: Towards a Fair Climate Future

There is widespread recognition that we need significant technological change to address the climate crisis, decarbonise, the economy and achieve net zero. These high-level recommendations from Sustainability first set out the necessary 'social scaffolding'¹ to support this change and move towards a fair climate future. Sustainability First will take these recommendations forward and consider what they mean in terms of practical steps and implementation for different actors.

Joanna Cohn, *Pangaea*

Climate change and fairness

Climate change, mitigation and adaptation must be treated as both environmental and social issues. Carbon reduction is critical, but the intersection with social inequalities and the unequal impacts on marginalised communities need attention too. No one should be left behind in transitioning to net zero. Fairness needs to be incorporated into all climate change decision-making, at local and international levels, and within governments, regulators and companies, while addressing underlying inequalities.

Inclusive engagement

Decision-makers must meaningfully engage citizens, both young and old, and varied communities, including those impacted already by climate change. Engagement must be inclusive and welcoming of diverse and varied perspectives, ways of working and envisioning solutions. By using deliberative and participatory techniques, such as citizens' assemblies, the public can shape agendas and decisions, develop new and innovative ideas, and build public support for decarbonisation.

Lived experience

The UK climate response must be informed by people with first-hand experiences of climate change and social inequalities. Those impacted by extreme weather, increased flooding, sea-level rise, higher tides and biodiversity loss, and those disproportionately affected due to social inequality, including marginalised groups, people with disabilities and those in vulnerable situations, should be involved. People with direct experience have 'knowledge, perspectives, insights and understanding gathered through lived experience'² that must be valued and inform decision-making.

Inspire through creativity

Art and creativity can help imagine alternative futures, innovate, communicate, and mobilise action, by engaging hearts and minds beyond science and technology. Silos between sectors must be broken and cross-sectoral dialogue facilitated so that creative people and industries can play a central role in tackling climate change. This involves supporting artists, writers and activists, across generations, and with communities impacted by climate change, to share experiences and visions – so their images and lived experiences can catalyse change. The value of qualitative insights and data, such as storytelling and personal accounts, must be better understood, and utilised to inform decisions and processes.

Diversity

There needs to be an examination of the lack of diversity in those sectors pivotal to delivering net zero and those working on environmental issues, and the factors that led to that lack of diversity. Only 7% of the workforce in the energy and utilities sectors are from black, Asian or minority ethnic groups. Most of the workforce is male and white.³ There must be a commitment to action on diversity, inclusion, and equality amongst colleagues, customers, stakeholders and communities. This includes diversity of perspectives, insights and understandings. Those working on environmental issues must create safe spaces, and receive training on how to do so, in which everyone feels heard, to shape processes and bring about change. Companies need to enact a range of measures, including: diversity in recruitment; proactively training staff members, business leaders and board members to promote equity, combat discrimination and challenge group think; fair pay; equal access to opportunities; communications about equality; addressing biased language; and reflecting the lived experience of customers and communities.

Leadership and responsibility

The UK government has a responsibility to understand the influence of the UK internationally and gain insights from countries impacted. As a high-income and historically polluting country, the UK government must lead in terms of mitigation policy and practice, for example by reducing emissions promptly, introducing carbon taxes and championing integrated international environmental and social reporting initiatives. The government should also provide transparent funding for adaptation projects, mitigation technologies, and social protection programmes, supporting, in particular, countries most severely hit by climate change. Domestically, the government must lead by example, using clear policy signals, its procurement strength, and planning and standard-setting powers to reshape markets to net zero by default. It must tackle the difficult issue of who pays for decarbonisation – consumers through bills, or taxpayers – to ensure opportunities for a greener future are open to all.

Businesses, particularly those in the energy sector, which are crucial in reducing emissions and enabling others to decarbonise, have a responsibility to ensure that their direct impacts and wider supply chains are socially just and environmentally sustainable. They need to consider how their corporate purpose helps provide solutions – not problems – for people and the planet, helping their workforces and the communities where they operate to prepare for a decarbonised future.

Whilst some issues require a global or national response, local authorities need to be adequately resourced and given powers to make change, because they are often better informed on local needs and inequalities. Communities need to be at the heart of change and decision-making to shape the transition to net zero. Local people need to be trained to implement decarbonisation and Local Area Energy Plans, with greater investment in local green jobs – particularly in areas that need to transition away from employment based on fossil fuels.

Decision-makers at every level of government and business must be held accountable for how they are delivering environmental and social commitments, to ensure that promises around net zero and a fair transition turn into action at the scale and pace required.

Systems change and values

Decision-makers must shift the focus of climate action beyond individual behaviour change and connect this to wider social and systems change. This means recognising the systemic structural inequalities, prompting change in power systems and developing sustainable processes and economic models that value social, environmental, and economic wellbeing. For example, metrics for measuring success as a nation, in government and businesses must go beyond economic growth, to meaningfully include and reflect social and environmental outcomes. This involves rethinking GDP and developing circular business models that eliminate waste.

Sustainable choices

Decision-makers and businesses need to ensure that sustainable choices are universally accessible, and that the options available consider the needs of people with disabilities, on low incomes, and in different circumstances. This involves being transparent and addressing the barriers facing consumers and citizens at local, community and individual levels and, where possible, through inclusive design, planning and support, making changes in behaviour automatic – or at least easy and fun.

Education

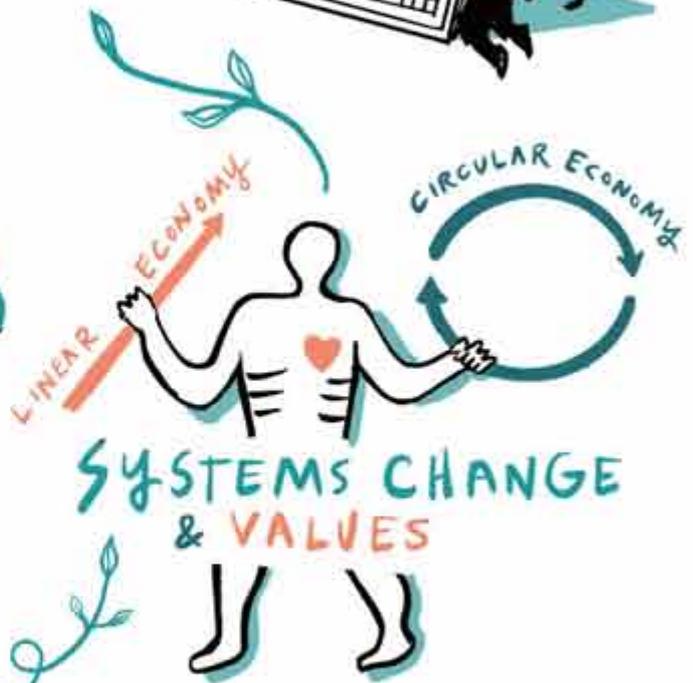
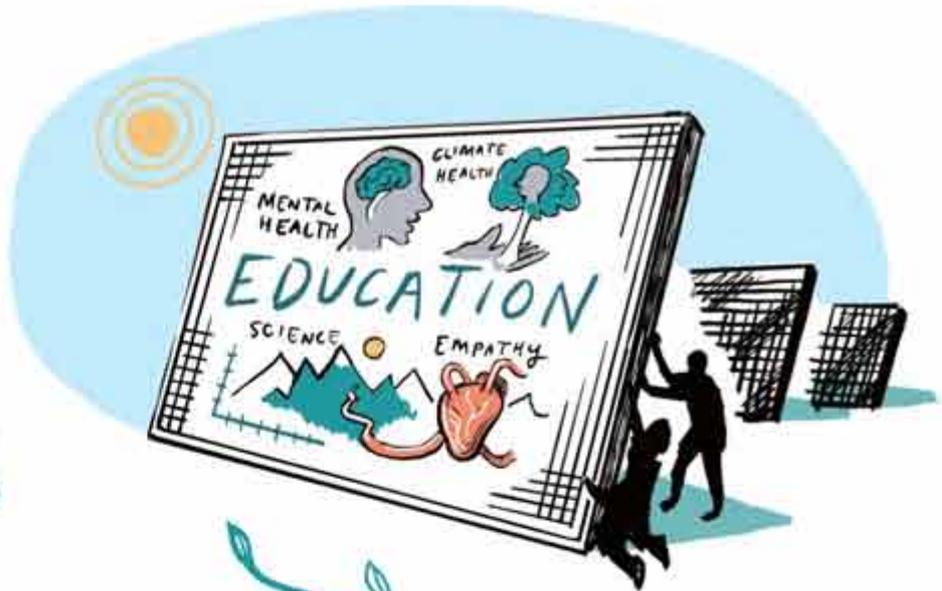
Young people are increasingly calling for climate action, and many are leading and demanding change. To respond to this, climate change, sustainability and social justice should feature more prominently in education and the national curriculum, embedded across subjects but also as discrete subjects. The ways subjects are taught should include different types of knowledge, diverse heritage perspectives, and a greater understanding of how traditions and culture can contribute to climate and environmental action. An understanding of the natural world we inhabit and how to contribute to fairer societies needs to start from primary school upwards, and sustainability courses could be added to GCSEs, technical qualifications and apprenticeships. Learners should be taught to understand the relevance of sustainability in every subject and in any career they enter. Measuring success based on academic attainment can put significant pressure on educational institutions, teachers, pupils and families, sometimes to the detriment of mental and physical wellbeing. We see potential in developing broader metrics of success that value personal, social and environmental wellbeing.



SUSTAINABLE
Recommendation
**TOGETHER
FAIR CLIMATE**



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References

- 1 Stephen Bennett – Together for a Fair Climate Future Engagement Panel
- 2 The Lived Experience Leaders Movement (2021) <https://lexmovement.org/>
- 3 Energy & Utility Skills <https://www.euskills.co.uk/the-sectors-inclusion-commitment/>



Climate Change,
Unequal Impacts,
and Fairness

4. Climate Change, Unequal Impacts and Fairness

Climate change is not a distant threat; it is happening now, and already affecting people in every region around the globe.⁴ The past year has seen flooding in China and Germany, extreme heat across North America and Russia, wildfires in Greece and Turkey, severe cyclones in India and Mozambique, and prolonged drought in Argentina and Ecuador. The UK has been affected by extreme weather, including flash flooding, and 2020 marked one of the combined warmest, wettest, and sunniest years on record.⁵

The consequences of extreme weather events and the impacts of climate change are not felt equally. Some countries, places, communities, individuals and environments are being impacted disproportionately and more severely than others. And often those least responsible for causing the climate crisis are those most likely to suffer its gravest consequences. Climate change both highlights and worsens existing inequalities.

Here, we explore the climate crisis as a social issue about fairness and equity, and why fairness needs to be built into climate change policy and decision-making. It considers how our response to the climate crisis can help us build more resilient societies that increase our overall wellbeing.

An environmental and social issue

Climate issues and social issues are intertwined; we cannot look at one without addressing the other. When thinking about the impacts of climate change, we cannot remove them from the contexts in which they are taking place and ignore the social, economic, institutional, and systemic factors.

This is important not only for how we respond to the impacts of climate change, but also for our understanding of the history and causes of climate change and inequality – in the UK and globally. We need to understand the systemic issues that have led to climate change and its unequal impacts, and address underlying social inequalities. Unless we recognise and act on this social dimension, we are unlikely to change behaviours and develop solutions to decarbonisation that work in practice or are publicly acceptable.



Previous page: Helen Birnbaum

Terra Firma Leaky Boat, 2.5 x 2.5 m (made of 130 pieces), ceramic, metal and glass, 2021

Helen's work *Terra Firma Leaky Boat* brings attention to both the refugee crisis and ecological crisis, and how these are inextricably linked. Many refugees live in climate hotspots where the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events is causing an average of more than 20 million people to leave their homes annually. The installation consists of 130 ceramic hands made in many colours to reflect all of humanity. Some of the hands are long-fingered adults; some dainty children's fingers and others gnarled with age, clustering around the rusty boat waiting to get on. The boat is made from an old metal wheelbarrow. Helen is a ceramic artist, based in Lancashire, making science-based art with a social emphasis.



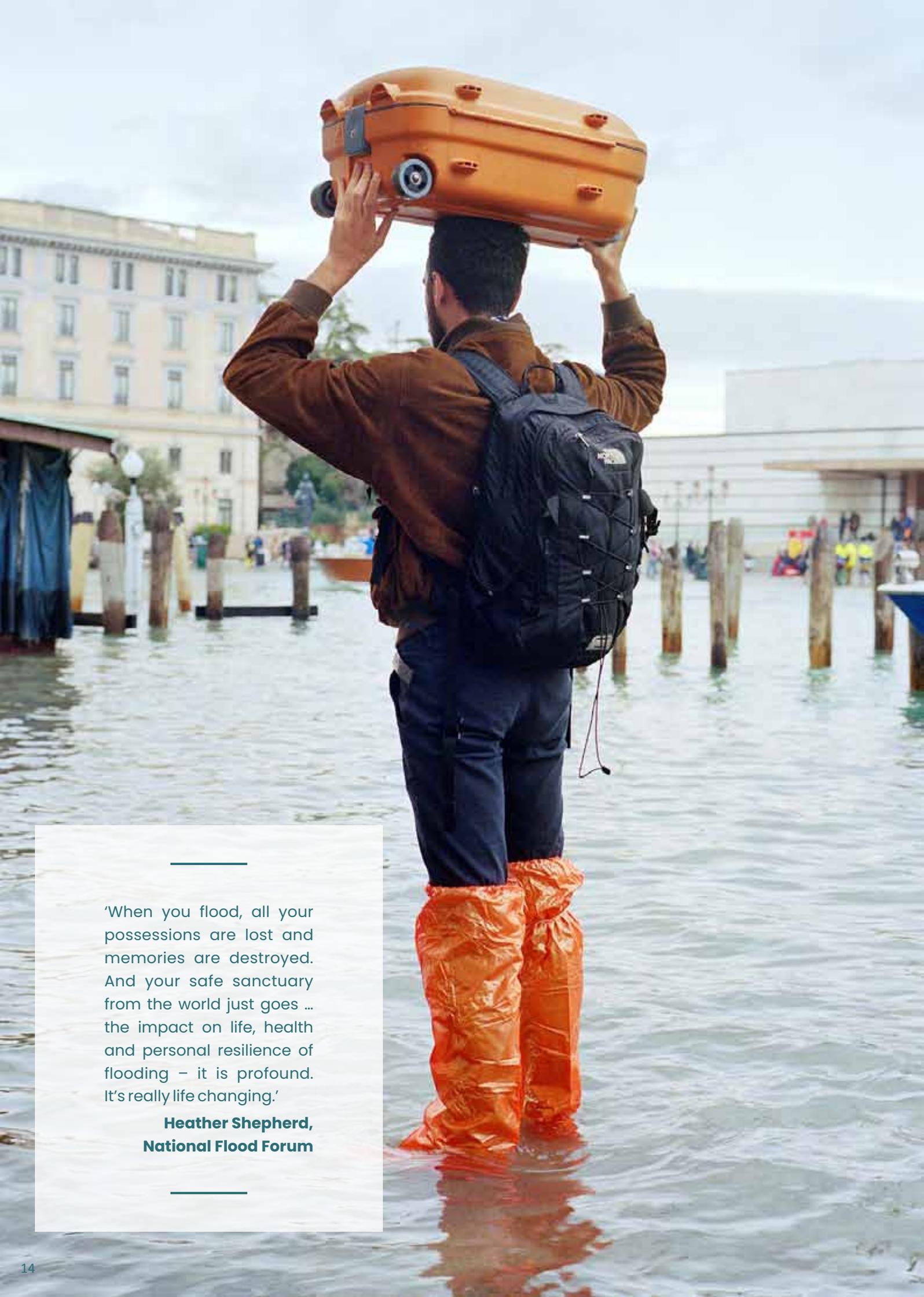
Above image: Nerissa Cargill Thompson

No Man Is an Island: Mapping the Issue, 90 x 120 x 4 cm, embellished recycled fabrics/clothing cast with cement in domestic plastic waste, 2020

Nerissa's work considers the packaging that we use and discard on a daily basis, objects so lightweight and seemingly insignificant that we barely notice them and the way our waste becomes subsumed into the natural world. *No Man Is an Island: Mapping the Issue* focuses on the far-reaching effects of plastic pollution. The embossed patterns from the domestic food packaging, captured in cement, recall the grid lines on maps. The naturally inspired textures created by blending recycled fabrics using an embellisher, emphasise how our waste becomes subsumed into our environment. Nerissa graduated with an MA in Textile Practice from Manchester School of Art, having originally trained in Theatre Design.

'We have to stop thinking of issues of social and environmental justice as separate. We cannot achieve one without tackling the other.'

Ravina Singh, Climate Disclosure Project



'When you flood, all your possessions are lost and memories are destroyed. And your safe sanctuary from the world just goes ... the impact on life, health and personal resilience of flooding – it is profound. It's really life changing.'

**Heather Shepherd,
National Flood Forum**

Climate Justice

The term 'climate justice' is often used by communities, activists, academics, and decision-makers to convey the inseparability of climate change and social justice and advocate for inequities to be addressed. It frames the climate crisis as an ethical and political issue, with connections to historical and current injustices.⁶ It highlights how those least responsible for climate change are likely to suffer its greatest impacts. The term is often used as a framework or set of principles to guide climate action and decision-making, grounded in human-centred and rights-based approaches,^{7 8} care and compassion, paying attention to the voices of those with lived experience of the impact of climate change, and connecting countries and communities so that we can build a fairer future together.^{9 10 11}

Climate justice can be applied internationally and nationally. The UK, given its history as a high-emitting country, must demonstrate leadership globally in combatting climate change and providing support to those countries most severely impacted. Similarly, domestically, the UK must ensure that the communities most impacted by the effects of climate change are engaged and supported; and that people living in the places and regions likely to suffer job losses as we move away from fossil fuels receive necessary training to focus on more sustainable employment. No one should be excluded as we decarbonise and adopt sustainable lifestyles; and policymakers should take full account of the interests of future generations in their decisions, without delaying difficult choices or foisting costs onto our grandchildren.

The unequal impacts of climate change

At a global level, low- and middle-income countries are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change, despite high-income countries being the biggest emitters. Oxfam found that the richest 10% of the world's population produce around half of all carbon emissions, while the world's poorest 50% (3.1 billion people) are responsible for just 7% of emissions.¹² For example, Small Island States such as the Pacific Island nations, are not only already experiencing extreme weather, severe cyclones, high tides, the intrusion of saltwater into their drinking water, and reducing crop yields; but whole countries are at risk of disappearance because of rising sea levels.^{13 14} In Fiji, 830 vulnerable coastal communities are listed for relocation.¹⁵ This is a climate equity issue on a global scale, not least because the Pacific is one of the regions producing the lowest carbon emissions but experiencing some of the most severe impacts.¹⁶

The UK and its inhabitants are experiencing the impacts of climate change through more extreme weather (rain, storms, heat waves, dry spells), increased flooding, sea-level rise and higher tides, and biodiversity loss – and will continue to do so. In turn, climate change impacts will put pressure on the UK's health systems, threaten food security, affect people's mental and physical health, threaten job stability and livelihoods, disrupt education, increase the cost of living, and impact communities' resilience, amongst other impacts.¹⁷

'In 2005, a deadly winter storm caused immense damage. The primary school in the main town was abandoned and the airport was under threat ... Uist continues many traditional ways of life, where the endangered Gaelic language is spoken by farmers and fishermen, who depend on the local environment for their livelihood. These are the people who need to be at the heart of public debate on the climate crisis in Scotland'

Liam Crouse, Misneachd (a grassroots advocacy group based in Scotland)

As well as international and regional inequalities, social inequalities mean that marginalised groups and people in vulnerable situations within countries and regions also tend to be disproportionately affected, especially women, people of colour, Indigenous peoples, disabled people, and people on low incomes.^{18 19} Old and young people are also affected differently. Often people's vulnerability can result from how different inequalities overlap and interrelate.

'Intersectionality is the overlap of various social identities ... intersectionality recognises the different layers of social injustices or oppression that [a] person might face'

Zarina Ahmad, Climate Change & Environmental Educator



Janice Ng's Sustainability First Writing Prize essay outlines²⁰ how disadvantaged groups are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change. They are more exposed to climate hazards, such as when new homes in disadvantaged areas are built in areas of future flood risk,²¹ more susceptible to damage, maybe as a result of intersecting health inequalities, and often have reduced capacity to respond and recover through being unable to afford insurance.²²

Institutional factors can affect vulnerability to climate impacts.²³ These include policies and planning, and their consequences for different communities and the allocation of public resources.²⁴ For example, if the costs of policies to decarbonise energy are put on consumer bills rather than taxes, low-income households may pay proportionately more than higher-income households.²⁵

The interconnection of social and environmental issues is apparent in the UK. For example, air quality and air pollution cannot be tackled in isolation from issues of health, income and social inequalities. In London, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations are 24% higher in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived, despite richer households owning more diesel vehicles and using

them over longer distances.²⁶ Black and Asian communities in London are also exposed to air pollution at the highest levels.²⁷ In areas where people from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to live, NO₂ from traffic can be 31% higher than in areas predominantly inhabited by white people.²⁸ Policies and service delivery must factor in the wider social context and avoid blanket approaches to air pollution.

Sustainable development is defined as: 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.³⁵ Intergenerational inequity is another concern. Younger and future generations will experience the greatest impacts of climate change, due to the actions, and inaction, of older and previous generations. Sustainability First's recent Viewpoint tackling the question of what is 'fair' between current and future generations argues that we have a duty to future generations to ensure the planet is habitable and to avoid setting humanity on a path to destruction.³⁶

Intergenerational dialogue is critical because older generations can sometimes feel disengaged from climate conversations, while issues such as extreme heat can bring higher risks for older people.

Spotlight: Extreme heat in the UK

Extreme heat presents a real and current risk to communities in the UK. The summer heatwave of 2003 killed 2,000 people across the UK,²⁹ and in 2011, almost a quarter of London neighbourhoods were categorised as extremely socially heat vulnerable.³⁰

Extreme heat disproportionately affects some groups and communities in the UK, including the elderly, people with pre-existing illnesses, people experiencing homelessness, urban inhabitants (due to 'urban heat island' effects³¹), and anyone who cannot afford measures to reduce exposure – particularly to their home and/or workplace.³²

Low-income groups may be less able to afford air conditioning and fans, and many lower-income jobs are more likely to be outdoors or involve longer hours, leading to increased heat exposure.³³ In addition, indirect effects of extreme heat also disproportionately affect low-income groups. Reduced crop yields due to prolonged high temperatures can increase food prices. This would disproportionately affect low-income households, whose expenditure on food often takes up a larger budget share.³⁴

Decision-makers need to embrace the principles of just adaptation and recognise the needs of those most impacted by climate change. Recommendations from Janice Ng, Sustainability First Writing Prize 2021 entrant, include the government: setting standards for buildings to minimise heat exposure, providing subsidies to low-income households for cooling adaptation, and preparing for food price surges including through emergency packages.

Gina Allen

Vivacity, 80 x 50 x 0.2 cm, car dirt on canvas, 2020

Gina works in collaboration with researchers, technologists and individuals who have experienced tangible impacts of environmental issues, aiming to 'make the invisible visible'. 'Vivacity' is a portrait of Ella Kissi-Debrah, who died at the age of nine having suffered with extremely severe asthma. Ella has since become the first person in the world to have air pollution legally recognised as a cause of death. Gina made the series of images showing Ella across her too short lifetime, which show her vivacity as well as her increasing illness. The works are made using dirt collected from the wheels and exhausts of cars. Traffic exhaust fumes and brake dust are contributors to pollutants in the air, and so the images have been created with some of the same materials that are likely to have contributed to her illness. This artwork has been produced with agreement of the Ella's Estate. All images of Ella are under copyright.

A fair way to move to net zero and adapt to climate change

Ethically, those who are responsible for the biggest climate impacts and are causing the most pollution should also be responsible for taking the lead in tackling the climate crisis. Bringing social justice into climate discussions demands that the voices of those previously marginalised are heard in climate responses, and communities are assisted in overcoming impacts,³⁷ ³⁸ in collaboration with communities who have the knowledge, expertise, agency and resourcefulness to produce creative solutions that respond to real needs.³⁹

‘For any solutions to be sustainable, they need to be done with communities because the voices of indigenous communities are important and must be listened to.’

Liam Crouse, Misneachd (a grassroots advocacy group based in Scotland)

In the UK, this is about ensuring climate action engages with, and takes account of, the people and communities most affected by impacts like coastal erosion, flooding and extreme weather, the loss of jobs caused by the closure of high carbon power plants and industries, and those who can't afford to pay for low carbon alternatives like electric vehicles or heat pumps. Without this, it will be difficult to achieve the behaviour change needed for a low carbon future.

Both adaptation and mitigation decisions need to consider short- and long-term climate impacts and the needs of future generations. This is also vital to reduce costs; the longer decisions are postponed, the more costs are likely to increase and options for change may well reduce. Without urgent action, we may pass irreversible tipping points that could challenge our very existence.



‘Our systems of government, of politics, of economics, have tended to act in the short term. And often, the decisions that are taken discount the interests of future generations and the planet. But in Wales, we’re trying to change that by passing a law which requires not just our government but all of our main public institutions to demonstrate how they’re acting for the long-term and how the decisions they take don’t harm the interests of those yet to be born.’

Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales⁴⁰



Above: Stephen Bennett

Layers, Bangladesh, 44 x 31 x 27 cm, recycled greenhouse glass, enamel paint, 2021

Stephen's starting point is how data increasingly penetrates our everyday lives whilst remaining abstract, vast, disembodied and unknowable. This, combined with globalisation and the growing complexity of society, is contributing to citizens feeling dislocated from public decision-making. Stephen's response is to seek out information from online sources and then materialise it in analogue, organic and sensorially diverse ways. By making scientific evidence something that can be visualised, touched and played with, he aims to empower people to explore and use it. *Layers, Bangladesh* aims to bring a data-infused lens to climate justice, considering the vulnerability of poorer countries. He uses recycled greenhouse glass that has been baked by the sun and frozen by the cold over countless seasons, with data layers covering sea level, rainfall, economic and population information. Stephen is a multimedia artist and co-head of the UK's Policy Lab, exploring the intersection of art, science and policy.

Voice of nature

Protecting the natural world is also a key part of fairness. We are part of nature, not separate from it; we cannot tackle the climate crisis without treating the planet itself fairly.⁴¹ The voice of nature must speak through our work. Not only should nature be truly valued, in itself, but nature is also important for health, wellbeing and quality of life; access to it is critical, including for disenfranchised and marginalised communities.⁴² Helping communities connect to the land can strengthen a sense of agency.⁴³ As the pandemic has shown, green spaces are vital for our mental health.

‘Our work has to be seeing ourselves as one part of nature, and one part of the larger ecosystem and seeing what we take, but also how much we can give.’

Daze Aghaji, Climate Justice Activist

Given that climate change won't affect everyone equally, for adaptation to be socially just it must identify and respond to the needs of those most at risk and address underlying causes of vulnerability as well as the impacts of climate change.⁴⁴ Climate change issues need to be addressed, alongside other government agendas from deprivation to health and wellbeing, with systems-based solutions.⁴⁵ Pursuing just adaptation also means funding and supporting adaptation in other parts of the world. The UK should provide funding through international aid, including funding for adaptation projects, mitigation technologies and social protection programmes, to help those most affected by the impacts of climate change, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.⁴⁶

‘We are calling on governments to step up and provide finance for those countries and communities most affected by the impacts of climate change, because they have a historical responsibility as a polluter to really rectify that injustice.’

**Sadie DeCoste,
Loss & Damage Youth Coalition**

In the UK, we have a target to meet net zero emissions (i.e. balancing out the carbon emissions produced and removed from the atmosphere) by 2050 (2045 in Scotland). We need policies and plans to facilitate these goals. Climate policies and a transition to net zero must not further entrench inequalities and disadvantage marginalised groups but ensure that the opportunities are shared fairly within and between communities. Climate change policies, such as on active travel, cannot further discriminate against groups including disabled people, and moving away from fossil fuels should not lead to a loss of livelihoods for those affected.

‘Disabled people face barriers to recycling, active travel, making their homes energy efficient, or even protesting about the climate emergency and getting involved in local decision-making and emergency planning. They are often overlooked in our responses to a changing climate. As disabled people, we need to be listened to and our needs and perspectives and our priorities to be taken into account.’

Susie Fitton, Inclusion Scotland

Sustainability First Writing Prize entrant **Ze Wang** proposes a model to alleviate unintended negative impacts of climate policy making.⁴⁷ Wang recommends a policy-checking procedure whereby the short- and long-term impacts (direct and indirect) of a policy decision are forecast and assessed, possible mitigation measures identified, policy decisions ranked, and only the highest ranked pursued.

Yet a just transition is not only about avoiding trade-offs and adverse impacts, but also about maximising and fairly sharing the benefits of the move to a low carbon future. For example, retrofitting housing (for example through insulation) can help address issues of fuel poverty and reduce emissions, and nature-based solutions can create opportunities for improving mental health and absorb carbon.⁴⁸

Summary

Climate change is affecting communities in all areas of the world. We must respond urgently to this emergency. Delaying action will only increase climate impacts and increase costs. Climate change is not felt equally, and climate responses must focus on those experiencing its gravest consequences and the systemic inequalities that cause this. The moral case for action is clear.

- The unequal impacts of climate must be recognised and actively addressed through decision-making.
- Climate change must be treated as a fairness issue; social and environmental issues cannot be treated separately.
- Change at the scale and pace needed will not be possible unless action is taken at the system level and unless structural inequalities and institutional factors that cause vulnerability are tackled.
- Climate change adaptation and the transition to a low-carbon future must be socially just and not widen existing inequalities.
- The co-benefits of decarbonisation should be maximised to tackle inequality in other areas of society.
- Communities, especially those most impacted by climate change and intersecting inequalities, should be actively and meaningfully engaged in co-producing climate responses, ensuring the voices of those with lived experience are central to decision-making.
- Decision-makers, including elected representatives and business leaders, must be held to account.
- The countries most responsible for the climate emergency must support those suffering its greatest consequences.

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Imaginative Visions for
a Fair Climate Future

5. Imaginative Visions for a Fair Climate Future

To date, facts, figures, science and technology have been at the forefront of climate change debates as we seek to understand the seriousness of this global threat, and how to adapt to it. Building this scientific understanding and technological response has been essential. Now, however, we need wider, more accessible and inclusive conversations to make transformative societal shifts. We will all be impacted by climate change, and we must all live more sustainably. It is time to hear from the people. Sharing ideas and lived experiences in creative ways, such as through art and storytelling, can help individuals and communities communicate their priorities and imagine alternative futures, bringing issues to life and reaching hearts as well as minds. This is crucial if we are to build the positive visions we need to mobilise individual and collective action.

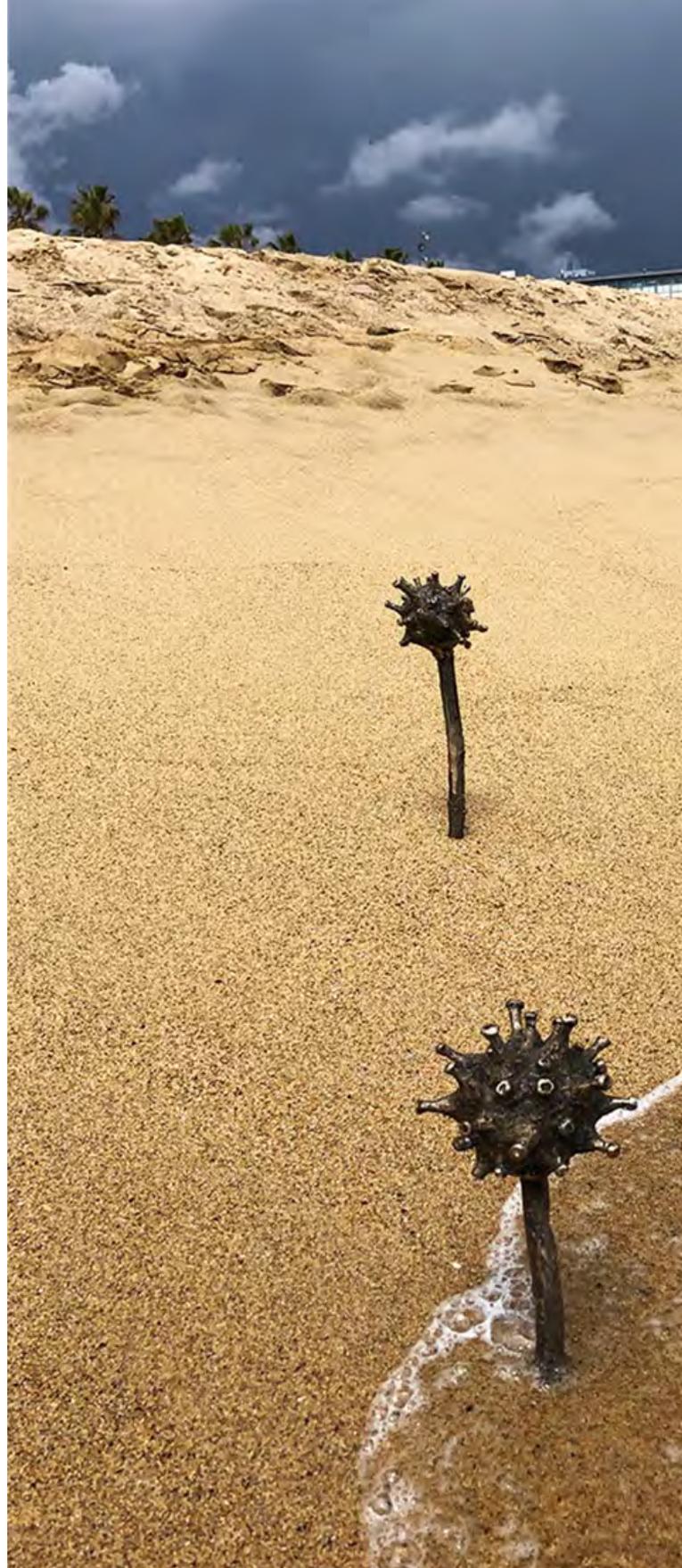
The Sustainability First Art & Writing Prizes 2021 focused on the theme Together for a Fair Climate Future. They asked entrants to consider the climate crisis, fairness in society, and how to work together to deliver change. We received a wide range of responses. Here, we share some of the approaches taken, different practices, topics and insights from across the entries. We also consider how sharing artworks and communicating stories through digital and other media can impact us. Many works reflect the recent experience of the global pandemic and what fairness means in this context.

Sustainability First Art Prize 2021

Art can help create connections and safe spaces for engagement,⁴⁹ provoke emotional reactions, lead to behaviour change, and help us imagine alternative futures. Art practice can be a space for self-reflection and contemplation, much needed in the context of the pandemic and eco-anxiety. Some artists found that the boundaries and constraints of lockdown led to new opportunities to innovate with sustainable processes and materials. Art is also an important outlet for feelings of grief and loss. It can be a space to challenge ideologies and highlight injustice.

‘Great art often challenges the dominant ideology and stimulates radical shifts in perspectives ... Art can also nurture empathy and sensitivity: qualities that are essential to eco-justice.’

**Extract from Mario Petrucci’s
Sustainability First Writing Prize entry**





‘Art is an amazing tool to tell stories. And we find that telling stories is the best way to appeal to people’s emotions and capture their imagination.’

Alice Farrell, Policy Advisor, Behavioural Insights Team

Previous page: Camilla Brendon

Living Canal Mobile, 300 x 150 x 50 cm , fishing rope, fenders, soil, plants, 2019

Camilla highlights habitats being harmed by climate change and pollution, with a particular focus on ocean health. She reuses, repairs and repurposes found and donated materials, often from in and around blue (aquatic) spaces. She incorporates living plants, as these produce oxygen and store carbon. Camilla works in interdisciplinary collaborations with community groups, scientists and schools. By creating artworks that use objects originally designed for other purposes she shows how, instead of consuming newness, we can move into a sustainable future reworking what already exists. Camilla is a mixed-media artist and activist who lives and works in London.

Above: Eva Joy Lawrence

Se Despiertan (They Awaken), 33 x 13 x 7 cm, 12 x 26 x 7 cm. Prints vary. Public intervention: bronze, photographs, 2019

Eva’s work explores climate-driven societal collapse and how these speculative, post-apocalyptic futures might force a restructuring of the way humanity organises itself to be fairer and freer. She photographed her small but sinister bronze sculptures in 2019 to highlight the invisible threat of melting permafrost to release ancient bacteria within. Viruses are a global concern and Eva creates physical representations of these microscopic menaces, using recycled materials and street-junk. She captures the grit and absurdity of urban environments in her works, which sit between humour and horror. She is a multidisciplinary artist, based in London. Eva graduated in Fine Art and Art History from Manchester School of Art and The University of Barcelona.



Stella Arion

Fons et origo, 33 x 30 x 34 cm, white porcelain, glazes, boro glass, copper (electroplating), 2021

Stella's work questions our perception of 'beauty' and 'ugliness', suggesting that, like life and death, these are intrinsically linked. Beauty can be seen in nature, both in the most vivid expressions of exuberant life and equally in the process of dying and decay. Her ceramic works celebrate the intricacies of nature, encompassing sharpness and fragility, darkness and light, the grotesque and the sublime. Inner silence and meditation are important to her making process, and she hopes her works will offer reconnecting threads or provoke introspection. Stella is a self-taught, full-time sculptor working with porcelain, glass and metal, with a background in art direction and fashion styling.

‘Soil is alive. It is truly the city that never sleeps – millions of life forms tirelessly interacting and creating fertility in our beautiful soil. Continued life on this planet is utterly dependent on these microorganisms.’

Henry Driver, Sustainability First Art Prize entrant

The Sustainability First Art Prize 2021 attracted many disciplines, including sculpture, ceramics, drawing, painting, fashion, textiles, video, photography, installation, sound, performance and collaborative engagement. Artists highlighted overconsumption, the impacts of climate change, connection with nature, ways to live more sustainably, the challenges of being green, and how to bring people together and be heard. Many considered the sustainability of their own practices and materials.

The Art Prize judges felt drawn into, moved, and inspired by the works submitted. Art can connect with audiences emotionally, it can invite audiences to engage and think about issues in new ways, and it can ‘provide an idea of possibility’,⁵⁰ including the possibility for change. **Matthew Burrows, painter, founder of Artist Support Pledge and Art Prize judge** reflected on how art can:

‘stop us assuming we know what the solution is and ask us to think about how we see the world’; in the way that art draws us in, it ‘holds your attention and imagination, allowing you to meaningfully engage with what you see’.

Many artists focused on connection with nature and ecology and how humans have created an idea of separateness from the natural world. Niamh Schmidtke embodies the Irish Sea in a spoken poem about renewable energy and geopolitics. Henry Driver reminds us that soil is alive with microorganisms upon which life depends. In Eilidh Guthrie’s video, *Forest Breathing*, a puddle appears to rise and fall in sync with the sound of breathing. She also creates sculptures of human heads discarded in the landscape, washed up on the shore like litter. Natalia Szumiec’s video follows the journey of a plastic bag in the landscape. Nigel Goldsmith’s video of shipping containers highlights mass consumption and our linear throwaway culture. Joe Habben’s photographs capture the impact of flooding, industrial expansion and mass tourism in Venice.

Many artists use natural, sustainable, and recycled materials in their practices. Adonia Hirst uses scrap and waste fabrics to create handmade soft sculptures about making connections. Beverley Duckworth uses nylon stockings and metal fence wiring as the base to support plant life.

Camilla Brendon uses found materials from blue spaces to create sculptures that incorporate plants.

‘Incorporating living plants helps to produce oxygen and store carbon and is also a reminder of how we can work together to mitigate climate change. Moving towards a sustainable future begins at all levels, including at home.’

**Camilla Brendon,
Sustainability First Art Prize entrant**

Gina Allen’s poignant portrait of Ella Kissi-Debrah reminds us of the unequal impacts of climate change. Ella died at the age of nine having suffered with extremely severe asthma and is the first person in the world to have air pollution legally recognised as a cause of death.

‘I made the series of images showing Ella across her too-short lifetime, which show her vivacity as well as her increasing illness, by drawing with dirt I collected from the wheels and exhausts of cars. Traffic exhaust fumes and brake dust are contributors to pollutants in the air, and so the images have been created with some of the same materials that are likely to have contributed to her illness.’

**Gina Allen,
Sustainability First Art Prize entrant**

Caroline Burrows’ social engagement project *A Year of Trying to be Environmentally Friendly: It’s Not Easy Being Green* records her daily experiences of trying to minimise her environmental impact. She highlights the challenges of changing behaviours and how microplastics are embedded in everything we use. She invites friends to share her poetry as a collaborative project. Laura Hopes, Martin Hampton and Léonie Hampton talked with people in Plymouth about their experiences of climate change and created installations in the landscape with the words ‘To be heard’ as a reminder of the importance of engaging everyone in climate conversations.



Sustainability First Writing Prize 2021

Storytelling, and creative ways of sharing ideas and experiences, play an important role in framing how we understand climate change, its impacts, and the actions we take in response. Research shows that storytelling is one of the best ways to connect with people's emotions and their imagination and can be more effective than plain facts and figures.⁵¹

Within the theme of Together for a Fair Climate Future, the Sustainability First Writing Prize 2021 asked writers to share their imaginative visions and practical steps for societal change, by responding to the question: *'How do we achieve meaningful social changes in the UK to tackle the climate crisis and develop a fairer society?'* The entries responded to the theme and question in unique ways: from poems and short stories to essays and personal accounts of the impacts of climate change. Writers explored themes of over-consumption and throwaway culture, inter-generational inequality and dialogue, compassion, connection with nature, floods and rising sea levels, fast fashion, fairness, and what the future might look like.

Some writers transported the reader to an imagined future where positive change had been made, others showed the severe impacts of climate change. Jacob Ashton's short story, set in the future and told through the eyes of an eel farmer and DJ, recounts the experience by a community over generations in response to environmental change, how more recent carbon sequestration plans and models of collective ownership have been adopted by the community, and the impact it has had on local people, nature and land.

'I like it, all of us being in it together. It's brought us closer together as a community, that's for sure. More trusting, more open, that sort of thing.'

Extract from Jacob Ashton's Sustainability First Writing Prize entry

Alexandra Davey imagines a town submerged by sea and explores how communities unite in response to disaster. Sally Cairns depicts a future in which one of the worst-case climate change scenarios has unfolded, and established economies are being tried in court over their inaction despite this knowledge. Jed Neill sets their story on the eve of the net zero deadline in 2050, and Kate Pellegrini's poem counts down the years to the 12-year deadline for limiting climate catastrophe, as set in Paris.

Entrants also share experiences and invite the reader to consider the implications of climate change for different people. Rachel Gorry's short story depicts a character who is finding ways to act 'greener' that are accessible within her time and budget. Lindsey Whittle's story follows a character through her education towards winning a Nobel Prize for climate change, highlighting the importance of education in developing a fairer society. Claire Pickard shares a personal account of the lived experiences of flooding – of destruction, crisis, and frustration with flood responses.

'The water flows, over and under, from higher ground to lower-lying land, filling the sunken gardens which become swimming pools of silt... Come daybreak, destruction. Counting cost, counting heads. The community comes together.'

Extract from Claire Pickard's Sustainability First Writing Prize entry

Some writers even take a view of the world through the eyes of inanimate objects. Susie Fox May tackles the topics of technology and behaviour change in transport through a discussion between two vehicles and a bicycle, and Lucy Lilley explores fast fashion and throwaway culture by animating items of clothing.

'So your owners use you much more prolifically than mine use me. Your household and travel omissions are probably higher than mine, so why should we subsidise you?'

Extract from Susie Fox May's Sustainability First Writing Prize entry

The breadth and variety of entries and the topics tackled creatively has highlighted the importance of storytelling, creative writing and qualitative data more broadly in responding to the climate crisis. Creative writing can provoke discussion, but it can also be fun and unexpected, helping people think in new ways.

Left: Eilidh Guthrie

Anthropocene Babies, 10 x 10 x 12 cm, raku clay, wild clay and raku glaze, 2021

Eilidh explores humankind's neglect of the natural world, focusing on the interlinked issues of plastic pollution and climate change. As well as polluting the oceans, the production and incineration of plastic releases greenhouse gases and contributes to global warming. Eilidh often uses found materials, digging wild clay, and she physically places her sculptures into the environment. Human forms are washed up on beaches or discarded in forests like abandoned plastic, as a reminder that by abusing our environment we are abusing ourselves. The beaches and woodlands in Kilcreggan form a source of inspiration and sites to photograph her creations.

'It was striking to see how some of the big challenges we grapple with in the energy industry day to day were so well conveyed through these pieces – so much more elegant than 'business speak' and so much more powerful in some ways.'

**Nicola Shaw, Writing Prize judge & President,
UK Networks National Grid**

The judges found the entries to be great sources of inspiration and innovation. 'We need these sources of inspiration to re-imagine'.⁵² Some of the pieces invited the judges to think about issues they hadn't thought about before or to approach them from different angles. The writers found unique ways to connect with readers emotionally. They remarked that some pieces were so evocative that they stayed with them for days after reading. Storytelling is crucial in communicating the lived experiences of climate change. The judges emphasised the importance of people having agency in their own experience to tell their stories.

The judges greeted the submission of poetry positively and highlighted poetry's ability to combine inspiration and information. **Writer, former Young Poet Laureate for London, and Writing Prize judge Selina Nwulu** gives this advice to everyone interested in getting started in poetry:

'Climate change and climate justice are so broad, so start from your own experience, then it's not what you think people want to hear but your perspective, which is entirely unique. It makes captivating poems.'

Sharing stories online

The internet and social media can help share stories, connecting people and mobilising change worldwide. We have seen this with the youth climate protests and Black Lives Matter movements. Technology helps distant impacts on the environment and movements that promote change to become accessible to us all.

'Digital action can help break echo chambers, because we all have interests outside the climate movement, and by bringing climate conversations into our other communities we can burst the bubble for many people, and we ourselves can learn from different perspectives, which is crucial if we want new voices to join the movement.'

Michelle Tan – Youth Climate Activist

Most of us get a tailored experience online through algorithms. This can mean we are stuck in our own bubbles, only exposed to ideas like our own.⁵³ Cyrus Jarvis who led Youth Climate Strikes across the UK, says 'to break out of these echo chambers, you have to think outside the box, and not focus on the techniques that you've been using before'.⁵⁴ The proliferation of fake news and conspiracy theories both call into question the ethical responsibilities of technology providers whose main aim is to keep our attention so that we buy products. This can lead to social media addiction, which in turn impacts our mental health. Companies and organisations can use storytelling to greenwash, misrepresenting themselves as environmentally safe.

The internet isn't the only means of sharing stories – newspapers, books, radios, comics, and art exhibitions are alternative channels. Marcus Smith argues that we need to use all mediums to communicate, especially to reach those without fast internet. He highlights the importance of tackling digital illiteracy and inequality.

'It's very clear that fake news and misinformation actually spreads quicker and wider than real news.'

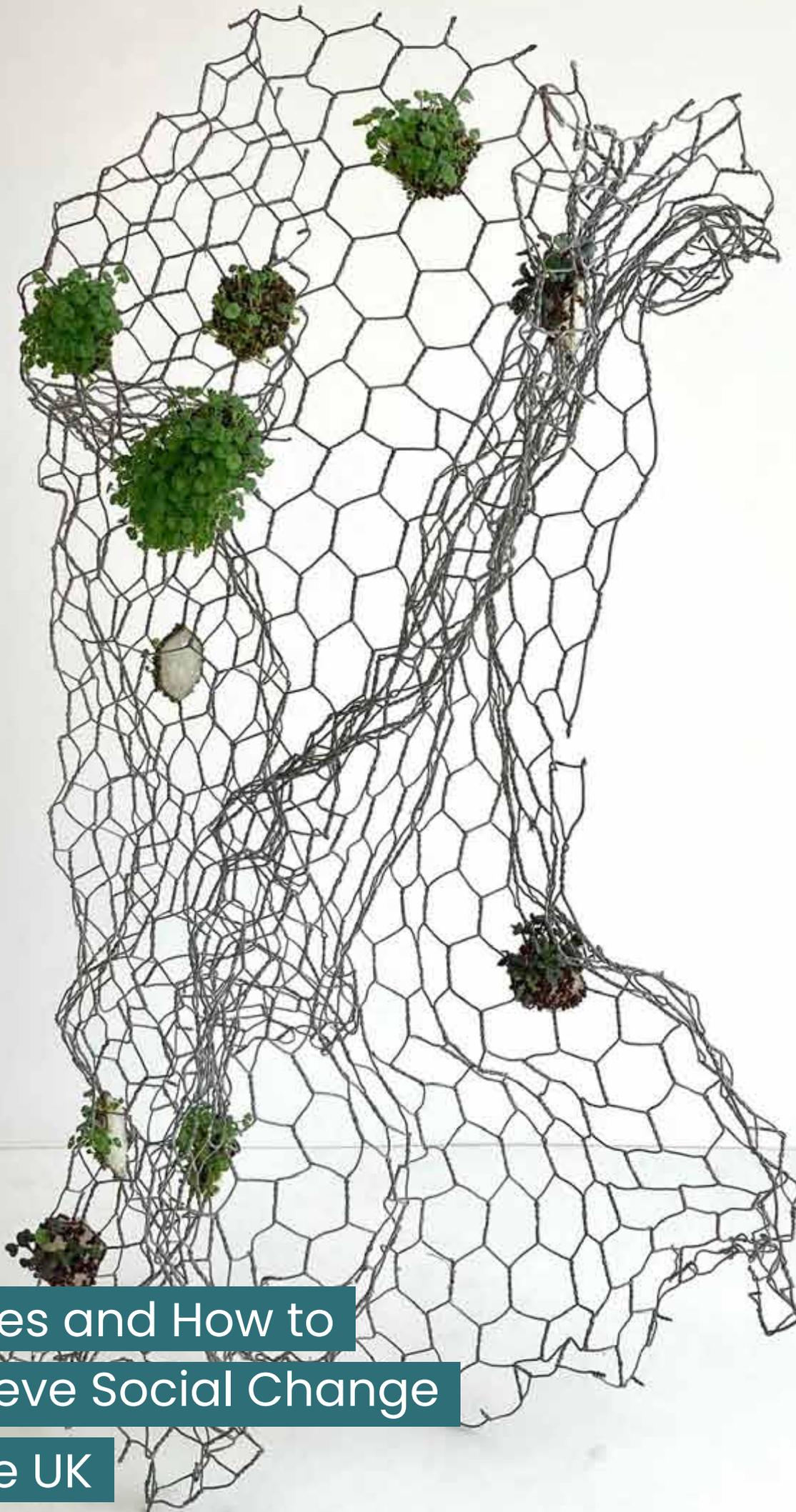
**Marcus Smith –
Media Creative & Journalist, BBC**

Summary

- Support artists, writers, activists, communities impacted by climate change and people across generations so that they can contribute to climate change debates and decision-making through their images, stories and lived experience.
- Policymakers and businesses need to work with creative people to inform their climate response. See artists, in the broad sense, not only as communicators but as agenda-setters, who can infuse the process of decision-making with fresh ideas and approaches. Engage people's lived experiences in ways that make sense to them.
- Promote cultural engagement on climate change and social justice. This brings a richness to climate discussions and can give people a sense of agency. It can also increase impact. Creative approaches can stay with you for a long time and may make you question your own choices and think differently.

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Values and How to
Achieve Social Change
in the UK

6. Values and How to Achieve Social Change in the UK

To meet the challenge of the climate crisis in the UK, build a fairer society, and make change happen at the scale and urgency required, widescale social, cultural and systems changes are needed.

For many people in the UK, some of the biggest changes felt in the past year have been in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We've seen huge behavioural and societal changes, such as wearing masks, social distancing, working remotely, and individual actions making a difference to wider society. But to what extent have our experiences changed what we view as important in society? And what can we learn from this global crisis and the ensuing changes, and apply to climate change and its unequal impacts?

We explore this in more detail, looking at how an assessment of our values might help make the changes needed in the UK for a fair climate future. What values do we need to live more sustainably, and how are these values reflected in our behaviour as individuals, in our communities, institutions, and at economic and systems levels?

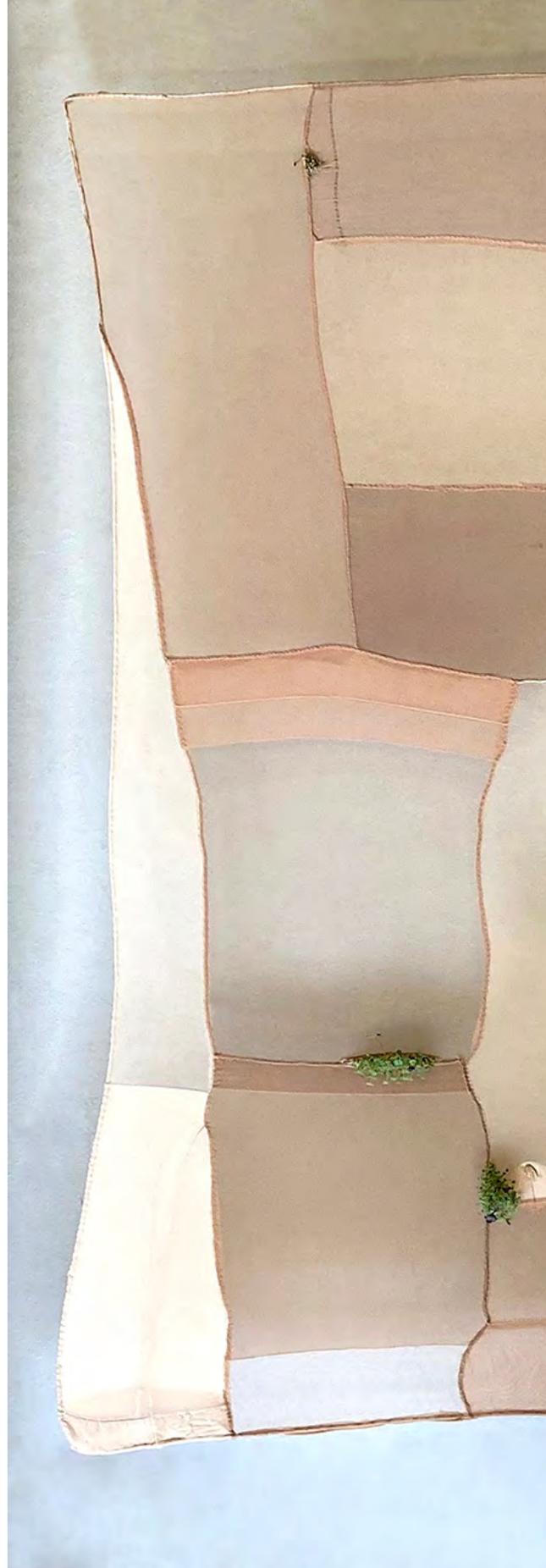
Values

Values are the things that we, as individuals but also as communities and society, believe are most important or desirable in our lives.⁵⁵ They shape how people view the world and their responsibilities, which in turn impacts their decision-making, behaviours, and lifestyles.⁵⁶

Researchers have identified two broad categories of values: *intrinsic* values, which are 'beyond the individual self' (e.g. community, equality, environment) and *extrinsic* values, which are 'self-enhancing' (e.g. wealth, authority, social status).⁵⁷ Studies have found that people who hold intrinsic values are more likely to express concern about a range of issues and, importantly, to take action to address those concerns.⁵⁸

Values can achieve meaningful social changes because they are motivators of change and of action on an individual and collective or institutional level, and they are all interconnected. Changes in individual values and public demand for change can put pressure on decision-makers to act in line with those values and lead to social change.⁶⁰ Public demand can set the pace and scale for change – which in the light of the climate crisis, needs stepping up. Things can often appear to change slowly and then actually change quite rapidly.⁶¹

Values can help shift our focus onto systemic causes of environmental, economic, and social injustices and thus help us to visualise goals and priorities for a fairer climate future.⁶² If we want to achieve social and systemic change in the UK, an understanding of how to strengthen intrinsic values within society is helpful.⁶³





Previous page: Beverley Duckworth
Host I

Above image: Beverley Duckworth
Cracks, 152 x 182 x 8 cm, used tights, edible seedlings, 2021

In her practice, Beverley explores the physical and conceptual boundaries which frame humanity as separate and superior to nature rather than continuous with everything on earth. She transforms what were once boundaries into structures supporting life. Working with 'slow' materials including dust, hair and seedlings she produces fragile, living works that require an ongoing process of tending and mending. *Cracks* references the legacy of nylon stockings as the first mass-produced petroleum-based material, evoking a synthetic bodily landscape that has been interrupted by living pockets of green. This patchwork alludes to a mended world where diverse people and nations work together to achieve a more sustainable future. Beverley is currently studying a Master's in Fine Art at Goldsmiths.



Rachna Garodia

Muddy Thames, 120 x 84 x 6cm, wool, cotton, linen, nettle, plastic, paper, moss, driftwood and rusted metal found by the river, 2019

Rachna's tapestries seek to bring the 'outside' in, evoking the simple pleasures of a walk in nature. For *Muddy Thames* she has reflected upon the repetitive and meditative aspect of walking by the river and the cyclical nature of high and low tide. The young alders, buddleias and willows growing among the walls and arches along the banks were a source of inspiration, always waving trapped plastic bags, bottles and other pollutants – a constant reminder to protect and care for what we love and take responsibility for the way we live. She incorporates bin liner strips together with other foraged materials (such as moss, willow and rusted metal) into the weaving. Rachna trained at the National Institute of Design in India and The Royal School of Needlework in London.

Values for a fair climate future

Sustainability First's 'What do we value in society?' event looked at how social values may have shifted during the pandemic and what values we need to live more sustainably.⁶⁴ Residents in Edinburgh shared their experiences of the pandemic – of loss and sadness, of not seeing friends and family, and finding new ways to connect online. Strong values included relationships and community, jobs, health and wellbeing, the natural environment, and creativity and learning.

'I value most my family, my job, and my health.' 'The thing I value the most is our natural environment, which directly affects us.'

**South Asian Community Networking
Key Services (NKS) Members,
Edinburgh**

The current systems and structures that are contributing to the climate emergency reveal values and lifestyles such as: over-consumption, consumerism, competition, individualism, separation from (or dominance over) nature, and a scarcity mindset.⁶⁵ To address the climate crisis, we need to reassess these values.

'Despite decades of economic growth, we've seen no increase in overall wellbeing. In fact, we've seen rising mental health issues, isolation, inequality. And, of course, the recent Covid pandemic has really shone a light on the fact that we've got our priorities wrong as a society. So, I think creating this happier world requires a shift in values towards happiness and kindness.'

**Dr Mark Williamson,
Action for Happiness**

Eight recurring values for living sustainably have emerged from speakers and contributors to the Together for a Fair Climate Future project:

Equality and fairness – All action to address climate change needs to be grounded in values of equality and fairness to redress deep structural inequalities and ensure a universally fair future.

Wellbeing – We need to pay more attention to how we care for each other and nature, our physical and mental health, relationships, and the wellbeing of future generations.

Community and deep connections with others – If we understand our interconnections, collaborate through collective action, and strengthen our solidarity it will help us feel part of something bigger than ourselves.

Connecting with and valuing nature – We are connected to nature and part of ecosystems and need to recognise the intrinsic value of nature beyond financial value – as well as the importance of green and biodiverse spaces for health, wellbeing, identity and agency.

Good jobs, livelihoods and a sense of purpose – All these factors will help support our lives, develop local community resilience and provide a sense of purpose.

Kindness, compassion, and mutual care – It is essential to show kindness and compassion for each other and the world, including those on the frontlines of crisis, and to demonstrate care in our actions and in the spaces we create.

Regeneration and resilience – We need to develop a regenerative culture based on care, self-care (learning about ourselves and our roles in society), community care, action care (care in the intense moments of action for change), and care for the earth.⁶⁶

Creativity and innovation – Through creativity and innovation we can support wellbeing, build empathy, imagine alternate futures, and innovate beyond current systems and mindsets to build a fairer climate future for the next generation.

Values help us find the motivating force for change. They need to be put into practice to lead to societal change and embedded at all levels, including amongst individuals, communities, institutions, governments and systems.

'I want to see a world that is more connected... at a deeper level, relationships, about humanity, and about us being connected to our natural environment.'

Zarina Ahmad, Climate Change and Environmental Educator

Putting values into practice for societal and systems change

Individual action and behaviour change

Our behaviours all have an impact on other people and the environment. The things we buy and our day-to-day choices, such as our food, clothes, electronic goods, travel, and the energy and water we use in our homes, businesses and schools can all contribute to climate change, habitat loss and pollution. They also impact people's livelihoods, both in the UK and worldwide through global supply chains.

Sustainability First's How Can We Live More Sustainably? event argued that actions with the biggest impact were: raising our voices and talking about climate change and fairness – voicing concerns and actively holding corporations and governments to account; cutting emissions by consuming less; changing our diets; choosing low-carbon transport; making homes and heating more energy efficient; and investing our money (bank accounts, pensions etc.) in sustainable companies.⁶⁷

Appealing to people's values and what they consider important is a motivating force for encouraging behaviour change.⁶⁸ Highlighting emerging social norms can cast new light on existing values and fuel positive behaviour – simply saying a movement is growing can licence people to join positive movements for change.⁶⁹

However, behaviour change cannot be expected from individuals alone. Individual choices and behaviours are shaped by the systems in which they are formed; questions of power, social justice, agency, and responsibility all matter.⁷⁰ Those with the most responsibility for causing the climate crisis should take the lead in actions to respond to it. In addition, due to time, costs, limited access, and inequalities, sustainable or pro-environmental behaviours are not always accessible to everyone.

'Although ... expensive cups and social media campaigns might be out of reach of her time and budget, she could still try to make some smaller changes.'

**Extract from Rachel Gorry's
Sustainability First Writing Prize entry**

It is the role of decision-makers and those with the levers of power and in a position to enable behaviour change who must remove barriers and make access to sustainable choices easier and more equitable, for everyone's benefit. Businesses, institutions, policymakers and politicians have a role to play in driving more sustainable behaviours and choices. This requires understanding people's day-to-day contexts, the practical barriers they face, and how to re-design systems so that sustainable choices are automatic – or easy, fun, and intuitive.⁷¹



Adonia Hirst
Exploration, 135 x 190 cm ,
repurposed fabric and stuffing, 2020
Adonia's soft sculptures invoke a personal and intimate space for social connection. They are sewn from repurposed fabrics, such as off-cuts of curtain fabric passed down by her mum, a curtain maker, and stuffed with recycled materials. She strives to create a fun, accessible and inclusive space where people from different generations can interact with the works, documenting the results through video and photography. Adonia graduated with a BA Hons in Fine Art from Newcastle University.



Community and collective action

One key message that has come out of the Together for a Fair Climate project is that communities are often at the centre of change. Community-level activities are an effective way to put values into practice and support collective wellbeing and long-term action – whether through community energy, locally owned food-growing projects, digital training, or creative workshops.

‘Start to cultivate a shared understanding of what these values mean to you and your community in your context.’

Kennedy Walker, Platform





Liz Elton

Tender, 300 x 295 cm, vegetable dyes from food waste, watercolours, compostable cornstarch, silk, seeds from medicinal plants, 2020

Tender is one of a series of landscape paintings concerned with environment and soil exhaustion. The ground is compostable cornstarch (material made from corn or potatoes and used for food waste recycling bags), painted with vegetable dyes from food waste, watercolours, water mixable oils, food supplements and earth pigments, and hand-sewn with silk. It has seeds from plants considered to have medicinal properties embedded in its seams (seeds of plants that are also constituents of a herbal compost activator designed in the 1940s). Delicate and fragile, *Tender* references the thin layer of soil that life depends on, considering our relationship with land, nourishment and waste. Liz thinks about break-down, time, self-care and care for the earth, regeneration and hope. The work spills off the wall and may seem to breathe gently as people pass. Liz has a BA in Fine Art, Painting from Wimbledon and a Master's in Fine Art from Chelsea.

Companies and responsible business

If the public are to change their behaviours, so too must companies. Firms need to reassess what it means to adopt responsible and sustainable behaviours and put this at the heart of their strategies and practice.⁷² To date, many businesses have focused on consumer behaviour but neglected their own systemic role and the levers they control to enable change.

'To lead positive change, businesses must support society in adapting to climate risk ... Business leadership must develop skills to support society in a way that addresses inequality and structural inclusion.'

Amisha Patel, Principle Power

Companies need to consider the wider social value they deliver to communities and citizens. They should demonstrate that their work benefits the public and the planet and lead by example – showing that change is possible,⁷³ and holding other businesses to account in a quest for more sustainability.

Sustainability First's Fair for the Future project has explored the role of essential service companies in delivering positive social and environmental outcomes, and what public purpose means in the energy, water and communications sectors. Our *'How-To' Guide for Public Utilities* sets out how companies can put corporate purpose into action and maintain a sustainable licence to operate.⁷⁴

Reframing what it means to be a responsible business must include redefining success on social and environmental outcomes – not just profit and growth – and involves stakeholder engagement, meaningful reporting, and economic sustainability for communities impacted by company operations and supply chains.⁷⁵ Businesses also need to be transparent about how decisions are made. This is vital for good governance but also for accountability and building public confidence about how to tackle climate change.

Government and policymakers

Government and policymakers also have a crucial role to play in enabling change at a systems level. Across the Together for a Fair Climate Future programme, speakers and contributors stressed the need for immediate action from the government, beyond setting targets. The time for just talking is over⁷⁶ and the government must recognise the urgency of climate change and act radically. Elected representatives have a key role in dealing with trade-offs and working across organisational silos; they must take the difficult decisions to deliver on climate commitments.



‘We have the solutions. We have the technologies. We have the knowledge to address climate change impacts and cause. It’s a matter of political will.’

Michael Mikulewicz, Centre for Climate Justice

Our [Fair for the Future](#) project has examined what government and regulators need to do in the essential service sectors to address climate change in a fair way.⁷⁷ Recommendations include:

- Shifting the focus from consumers to citizens and communities.
- Addressing who pays for welfare (bill payers or taxpayers) as we mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Using government Strategic Policy Statements (which set out the government’s priorities) to regulators so that long-term issues are not postponed unnecessarily, collaboration between companies and local authorities and elected mayors is enabled, and more strategic working between different sectors and regulators at a systems level is encouraged.
- Giving regulators net zero, resilience, and climate adaptation duties.

In our wider work, Sustainability First has called for new frameworks for policymakers to deal with fairness as we tackle climate change, particularly regarding inter-generational costs and impacts.⁷⁸

Sustainability First’s Writing Prize 2021 asked entrants to respond to the question: How do we achieve meaningful social changes in the UK to tackle the climate crisis and develop a fairer society? Some of the entries included recommendations for government and policymakers, including:

- Backing for new businesses in a circular economy e.g. re-use, repair and re-share businesses.⁷⁹
- Supporting locally-led community initiatives such as community gardens.⁸⁰
- Changing regulations for new buildings and using taxes to encourage retrofitting and upgrading existing buildings, in line with net zero targets.⁸¹
- Incentivising behavioural and organisational change, through regulatory and fiscal measures, and increasing the visibility of low-carbon tech so that decarbonisation becomes a norm.⁸²



Natalia Szumiec

Suffocation, animation, 2021

Natalia uses dark humour to explore the issues of plastic pollution by looking at its impact on the fauna and our planet's future. Although the UK has recently banned certain single-use products and doubled the cost of plastic bags, it still is not enough to stop the climate crisis. Her animation and video montage traces the journey of a plastic bag in a playful way.

Societal and systems change

A system is an organised collection of components that work together as part of a network to achieve an overall goal.⁸³ The example closest to home is the human body.⁸⁴ In the case of climate change, individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, government and policymakers are all parts of systems. Our values are intangible parts of these systems, alongside power dynamics, social norms, assumptions, and other components beneath the surface.⁸⁵ Policymakers have generally paid less attention to these than to the technological and scientific aspects.

Tackling the climate crisis requires fundamental systems change on all fronts because current systems succeed in delivering certain goals, but often at the detriment of the environment and people.⁸⁶ We must pursue systems that enable living sustainably – with wellbeing, fairness, community, nature, compassion, regeneration, resilience and creativity at their heart – all within the planet's ecological boundaries.

Systems change needs to be both top-down and bottom-up. It must be collaborative in producing solutions between actors: individuals, communities, businesses, policymakers and political leaders. As individuals, we can demand change from businesses and government, and institutions and policymakers can also support individual and community action, whether through economic policy, legislation or funding for community-led initiatives.

‘Systems change recognises that we can't just change one small part of the system to solve the problem. In fact, we need to change the whole goal of the system.’

Jack Barrie, Zero Waste Scotland

‘Our education systems, our political systems, our financial systems, have all made ... exploiting resources and people ... normalised.’

Zarina Ahmad, Climate Change & Environmental Educator



Niamh Schmidtke

Walkie Talkie to the Waves (Radio Play), 15 minutes, audio, 2021 and *'X' Mapping*, 200 x 400 x 30 cm, 3D printed ceramic data sets stained with iron oxide and chrome; 3D printed resin wind turbines, soil, 2021

Niamh's practice is preoccupied with anthropomorphising elements of our ecologies, voicing inanimate objects, to facilitate conversations between human and the non-human beings they aim to control. She uses fiction to express the social and political complications of 'being green', such as through *Walkie Talkie to the Waves (Radio Play)*, which gives voice to the Irish Sea. *'X' Mapping*, uses CO₂ data sets from Irish and British national statistics offices to construct a map of the Irish Sea's coastline, combining flat tiles and 3D ceramic printing. Niamh is a visual artist based between Dublin and London, with Irish and Swedish heritage. She graduated with a BA hons in Fine Art from Limerick School of Art and Design and a Master's in Fine Art at Goldsmiths.



Shake up the System conference: How can we change our complex social systems for a fair climate future?

Systems change is like an iceberg. To change a system, you need to consider not only what is visible but also the deeper patterns, structures and values that lie below the surface.

Personal actions can be impactful when they add up to something bigger, but there are limits, as actions are dependent on the infrastructures and systems in which they are nested. Personal actions are linked to social and political/structural scales.

Eight ideas for linking different scales of change:

- 1. Map systems and levers of power:** Coordinate and collaborate with different actors, and break down silos. Take a cross-sectoral view to help actors understand their roles and responsibilities in a system and how their actions affect other parts of a system.
- 2. Get change to snowball:** Bottom-up and top-down initiatives happening simultaneously can accelerate action across a system, enabling change at scale and pace. Empower people on the ground, create opportunities for collective action, and project people's voices at political/structural scales.
- 3. Make change tangible:** Identify co-benefits and planning/design interventions that achieve multiple goals and respond to existing problems. Local/regional approaches can cut through complexity.
- 4. Make change inclusive:** Ensure the public have a say in decision-making and use deliberative engagement to ensure changes are effective, accepted, and respond to the needs of those impacted.
- 5. Put yourself in decision-makers' shoes:** Understand the motivations of decision-makers, make it easy for them to do the right thing, and make change simple and attractive.
- 6. Communicate clearly and share what's already happening:** Redirect information flows. Listen to people's experiences, share information beyond academic and policy spaces, and pass on knowledge to equip younger generations.
- 7. Vision and leadership:** Be bold in envisioning systems change and the process to get there. Use art and creative approaches to connect actors in rethinking systems.
- 8. Make the most of whirlwind moments:** Use key or unexpected moments of change as catalysts to maximise impact. In between moments, build power and develop tools and resources to ensure change sticks.

It is crucial that we examine the economic models that underpin our society to move away from unsustainable systems. The economy's current goal is growth. What would our economy look like if it were centred on sustainable living, social and ecological wellbeing and fairness?

'Rather than let the economy dictate what we value, we need to take the responsibility for choosing the values that should dictate our economy.'

Extract from Dylan Ngan's Sustainability First Writing Prize entry

Changing the principles underpinning economic policy is a good place to start. Sustainability First's new [Sustainability Principles](#) project is seeking to do this by developing and testing a new set of principles to shape the attitudes, mindsets and culture of decision makers in essential services.⁸⁷ There are several models proposed that could restructure our economy to be more regenerative and distributive.

Wellbeing economy

'A wellbeing economy is an economy which puts the wellbeing of people and the planet first. The economy is a means to an end, not an end in and of itself'.⁸⁸

Rather than the purpose of the economy being to deliver economic growth, it would be to deliver collective wellbeing and social justice on a healthy planet.⁸⁹ It would mean pursuing growth only where it would contribute to these higher order goals.⁹⁰

Moving away from measuring our economy in terms of growth and GDP (gross domestic product) would require different ways of valuing the performance of the economy, government and society. Other ways to measure value could include health and wellbeing indicators, delivering positive climate and nature-based solutions.⁹¹ These could build on existing quality-of-life indexes and sustainability metrics.⁹²

'What is the purpose of economic growth? It is to improve lives. What is progress? It is improved lives. How do we know if we have improved lives? We ask people how they are doing. That is a wellbeing metric.'

Nancy Hey, What Works Centre for Wellbeing



Legislation can provide a basis for wellbeing budgets and frame how we deal directly with fairness and intergenerational equity and build a supportive culture for sustainable change. There are a number of examples where ideas of a wellbeing economy are being tested in practice:

- In May 2019, New Zealand launched the country's first Wellbeing Budget, which was designed to put wellbeing and the environment at the centre of policies. Alongside economic and fiscal indicators, it introduced social and environmental metrics. It aimed to balance the needs of current and future generations.⁹³



- In Wales, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015⁹⁴ put in place seven wellbeing goals public bodies must achieve. Based on these goals, public bodies are required to think about the long-term impacts of decisions. One example of the Act in practice was the rejection of a proposal to build a £1.1 billion M4 relief road in 2017 for failing to address the needs of future generations.
- The Santa Monica Wellbeing Index combines multiple data on the local community's wellbeing to better understand needs and challenges faced by the community, and help the city work more effectively. It has been used to improve environmental conditions, increase affordable housing etc.⁹⁵

Above: Gwen Siôn

HS2 Ghostlands, experimental music piece and instrument 1, 50 x 10 x 8cm, fallen/felled tree branches collected from the locations, 2021

Gwen explores endangered woodland through the architectural qualities of sound. She uses non-traditional musical composition methods, field recordings and also collects physical fragments of the landscape to create hand-built instruments, such as from fallen or felled tree branches. *HS2 Ghostlands* connects people to the natural environments that will be lost through the construction of High Speed Rail 2, including 108 ancient woodlands and wildlife habitats. The project includes a digital archive of audio recordings in the form of an interactive sound map, a set of musical instruments and a newly composed piece of experimental music. It is the result of extensive research at 18 sites across Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and the outskirts of London over a five-month period. Gwen graduated in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins.



Doughnut economics

The doughnut economics model, developed by Kate Raworth, is another model that structures the economy to be both regenerative and distributive by design – working with the natural world and ensuring opportunities are shared equitably.⁹⁶ The model has an inner and outer ring. The outer ring represents environmental planetary boundaries, such as climate change, biodiversity loss and air pollution. The inner ring represents social foundations, such as health, education, social equity. Between these social and planetary boundaries lies an environmentally safe and socially just space in which humanity can thrive.⁹⁷

‘Ensuring no one falls short on the essentials of life ... whilst not overshooting the planetary boundaries and Earth’s life supporting systems.’

Rob Shorter, Doughnut Economics Lab

Circular economy

Today’s economy is linear. It follows the pattern of take, make and waste.⁹⁸ Raw materials are taken, they are made into products, which are used and then discarded as waste. For resources to be designed, made and used within the scope of planetary boundaries, we need an economy that’s circular and regenerative by design. Growth needs to be decoupled from the consumption of finite resources.

The circular economy model is about:

‘designing ways to take pollution out of our economic systems, out of our communities, and keep products and materials in use for as long as possible and regenerating our natural ecosystem.’

Jack Barrie, Zero Waste Scotland



Nigel Goldsmith

Terminal, video, 2020

Nigel explores the scale and impact of human behaviour on people and planet with a focus on global trade and consumer culture. With economies that rely on endless consumption, the result is growing amounts of harmful waste and depleted ecosystems. His work subverts the documentary 'day in the life of' style of film to emphasise and magnify the scale of the climate crisis and our modern industrialised nation's reliance on linear economics and throwaway consumption. He uses the visual and aural strategies used in advertising to mesmerise and seduce the viewer, presenting a subject overwhelming in scale yet somehow pleasing to watch. Nigel was born in Carmarthen in Wales and is now based near Bath. He has a BA in Photographic Art from the Polytechnic of Central London (PCL) and a Master's in Fine Art from Bath School of Art.

There are many examples of businesses putting into practice the principles of a circular economy. Some of these include:

- Fat Llama⁹⁹ – an online platform to share or lease your personal items with neighbours. This means people don't need to buy new items and products are re-used.
- Scottish whisky distilleries reusing the waste (grains) of the distilling process and converting them into biofuels and plastic alternatives.¹⁰⁰
- Water sector companies working with nature to create eco-systems services, and using sludge to create energy.

Barriers and enablers of systems change

Across the Shake up the System conference, several common barriers and enablers to societal and systems change emerged.

Some of these *barriers* to change included:

- The complexity of mapping systems and the difficulty in making connections across silos – leading to a lack of clarity on the roles and responsibilities of different actors.
- Resource and funding constraints, making it challenging for changes to be scaled up.
- Lack of inclusion and diversity, and an unequal distribution of power.
- Communities feeling consultation/research fatigued and not seeing the outcomes from their contributions into projects.
- A lack of clear and accessible messaging around key issues.
- An education system that is not preparing young people for current and future challenges.

However, several *enablers* of change also arose to help overcome these barriers:

- Personal action can enable a ripple effect amongst social networks, but for wider societal and systems change coordination between personal, social, and political action is key.
- Mapping decision-makers so that people know where power sits and can challenge the balance of power and enable more inclusive approaches.
- Regional, local and place-based approaches to enable cross-cutting solutions that are tangible for communities.
- Meaningful engagement and enduring part-nerships to enable sustainable, long-term change.
- Funding and resourcing to enable local authorities, NGOs and community groups to scale up and make change happen.
- Identifying and building shared societal values to enable collective change amongst people, networks and groups with common interests.
- Using art, creativity and qualitative data, including storytelling, to enable change that is simple, fun and attractive.



Summary

To meet the challenge of the climate crisis in the UK, build a fairer society, and make the change happen at the scale and urgency required, widescale social, cultural and systems change are needed.

- Shift the focus of climate action beyond individual behaviour change to wider systems change, through cross-sectoral collaboration, meaningful engagement, bold leadership, inclusive design and planning, and by ensuring all sides make the most of catalysts for change.
- Reassess the values underpinning our society and economy – using alternative models such as a wellbeing economy.
- Develop metrics for measuring success as a nation, in government and businesses, which go beyond economic growth, to include social and environmental outcomes that reflect our values.
- To change a system, consider deeper patterns, structures, power dynamics and values that lie beneath the surface.
- Link different scales of change by: mapping systems and levers of power, simultaneous bottom-up and top-down initiatives, making change tangible and inclusive, understanding the motivations of decision-makers, communicating clearly and redirecting information flows, using art and creativity to rethink systems, and making the most of key moments of change.

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Inclusive Engagement
and Working Together

7. Inclusive Engagement and Working Together

It is critically important that the public are meaningfully engaged in decision-making about the climate crisis and that people and communities are put at the heart of shaping the climate response – both globally and in the UK. Here, we look at why engaging the public is so important, share examples of engagement, and look at why leaders of change need to collaborate and build partnerships for climate action, if we are to build a fair climate future.

Bursting climate bubbles

The environment sector is the second least diverse in the UK.¹⁰¹ Diversity in the sector has fallen behind the rest of the nation and it has seen persistent patterns of exclusion, with various groups being underrepresented.^{102 103} Addressing these issues must be a priority. Organisations need to think about who is making decisions, who is being consulted, and who is being involved. Those working on environmental issues must create safe spaces (and receive training on how to do so), in which everyone feels included and able to contribute to change. A movement is not sustainable if it only involves a small group of people.¹⁰⁴ If climate bubbles continue to talk within themselves with the same questions, they'll get the same answers.¹⁰⁵

'Inclusivity isn't the same as action and you have to be listening to those voices – not just capturing it on a piece of paper but capturing it in real actions and pushing the agenda forward.'

Charlie Ogilvie, COP26 Unit Cabinet Office

In particular, the movement needs to amplify the voices and views of those previously marginalised, and reach out to communities experiencing the worst effects of climate change. Decision-makers – government, regulators, businesses and the third sector – need to meaningfully involve citizens in responding to the climate crisis, recovering from the pandemic, and transitioning to net zero.



'Inclusion is not an option, it's literally just a better way of delivering anything that gives you better outcomes.'

Nikita Mistry, COP26 Unit Cabinet Office



Previous page: Hester Ellis

Nest//Bowl//Vessel, 54 x 130 x 120cm, naturally dyed calico fabric, recycled cardboard, 2021

Hester focuses on the emotional connection between herself and the surrounding natural, non-human world. She becomes immersed in a place of creative fluid and flux. Her piece titled *Nest//Bowl//Vessel* is an expression of gratitude and reliance on the natural world. She uses home grown and foraged dyes to colour bundles of second-hand fabric and buries them underground, often with notes and words written for the soil. After weeks and months have passed, she resurfaces the bundles and witnesses the transitions that have come from the earth. The complexities of layered life and decay cause beautiful changes. Hester is an ecological artist who explores a mixed-media expression of time, environment, nature, growth and play.

Above: Laura Hopes, Martin Hampton, Léonie Hampton
(Still/Moving Projects)

To be heard (Carbis Bay Woods), 76 x 101 cm, digital photography, 2021

Still/Moving Projects is a platform for exciting and ambitious collaborative artistic projects, with a focus on engagement within targeted communities. Through conversations on the street and workshops in Plymouth, Still/Moving Projects wanted to find out what local people felt needed to be said. Their words were distilled and transformed into light sculptures. These words and the people that made them offer a portrait of this small community during this extraordinary global event. They want to be heard. Dr Laura Hopes is an artist and researcher, with a PhD from the University of Plymouth. Martin Hampton is an artist and award-winning filmmaker. Léonie Hampton is an artist and internationally exhibited award-winning photographer.

Citizen engagement for climate decision-making

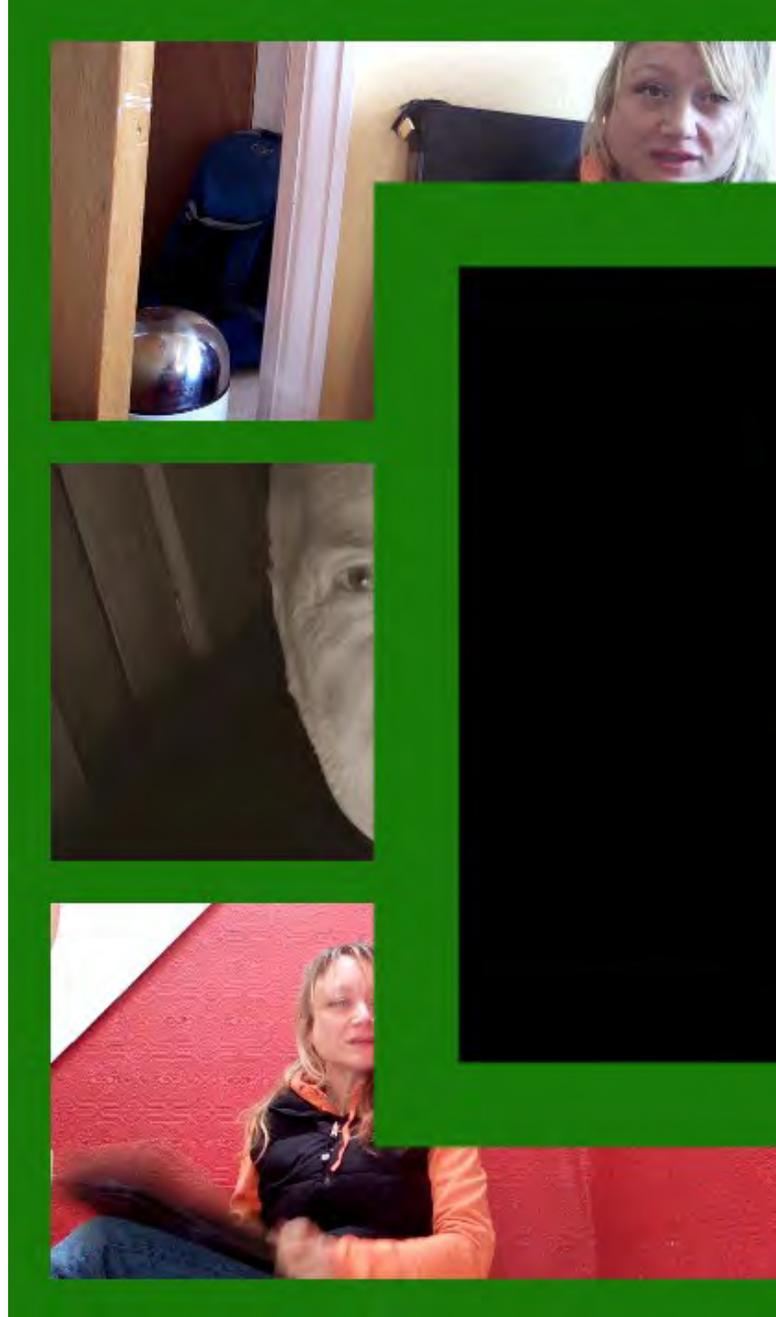
Not only is engagement central to equity and fairness, but it can help innovation and address the environmental and societal problems we face. Principles of fairness need to be reflected not only in the intended outcomes of climate projects, but also in the decision-making process. Procedural fairness – who sets the agenda, how decisions are made and whose voices are heard – is critical. This includes enabling communities to overcome institutional barriers to decision-making and shaping climate responses.¹⁰⁶ Marginalised voices and those currently under-represented in decision-making need to be engaged in planning, as well as those with lived experience of climate change. There is a clear moral case for meaningful engagement.

First, engagement can help decision-makers better understand the needs of citizens. As the impacts of climate change aren't felt equally, adaptation and climate responses often need to be context specific, otherwise they can risk exacerbating inequality and vulnerability. A lack of engagement can also create solutions that are 'unimplementable.' Policy processes need new tools for engaging communities with lived experiences to shape responses collaboratively.¹⁰⁷ Climate decision-makers can learn from sectors where this has been done successfully. For example, Poverty2Solutions¹⁰⁸ are a group of activists with lived experience of poverty in the UK. Their Do Your Duty for Equality campaign was successful in ensuring their voices and experiences were included in policy discussions and solutions.¹⁰⁹

Claire Pickard, in their Sustainability First Writing Prize entry, shares a personal account of flooding and warns what can go wrong if those with direct experience are excluded:

'the plans, developed in concert and collaboration, are shelved, each new project manager further and further from the knowledge of the local water flows. Collective forgetting of the promise made to the community, the reason why.'

Second, engagement can also help decision-makers deal with trade-offs – complex decisions that may involve benefits in some areas but costs in others. A trade-off might mean balancing the needs of current versus future generations. Citizens can help decision-makers navigate these difficult decisions, share their views on what they consider to be fair or just, and suggest priorities for change, while decision-makers can better understand the social implications of decisions.



And third, targets of net zero emissions by 2050 cannot be reached without citizens. As outlined by the Climate Change Committee, 40% of the carbon reduction (in 2035 scenarios) will need to come from consumers adopting low carbon technologies, and a further 15% from consumer choices (e.g. energy efficiency).¹¹⁰ Without understanding the needs, contexts, and barriers consumers face in accessing these choices, climate mitigation policy may be rendered irrelevant. People – citizens as well as consumers – are part of the solution.

These ideas are explored further in Sustainability First's viewpoint on why a fair climate future is crucial for the success of UK climate action, published earlier in 2021.¹¹¹



VerseCycle



Caroline Burrows



Maximising public value through engagement

In 2021, Sustainability First published a paper exploring the importance of engagement for decision-makers in the context of the water and energy sectors. It focused on how engagement can maximise public value – improve economic, social, and environmental benefits. The paper puts forward 26 recommendations aimed at decision-makers in the water and energy sectors, including government, regulators, companies, and NGOs.

Read: [How engagement can maximise public value in the essential services of water and energy](#)¹²

Above: Caroline Burrows

A Year of Trying to be Environmentally Friendly: It's Not Easy Being Green (Verses 1–10, 11–20 and 21–30), videos, 2020

Caroline spent a year writing a verse a day called *A Year of Trying to be Environmentally Friendly: It's Not Easy Being Green*. The verses, written between Sept 2019 and Sept 2020, chart the successes and failures in her attempts to change her own habits within a consumerist society that does not enable or encourage this. During the Covid-19 lockdown, she turned this into a collaborative social-engagement video project, with guest readers recording alternate verses in groups of ten. Caroline is an emerging poet, filmmaker and writer who specialises in themes associated with mental health and being environmentally friendly.

'Citizens' Assemblies sit so the people can state priorities, like a Jury discussing the facts their recommendations form a binding mandate restoring trust as paid lobbying cracks'

**Extract from Kate Pellegrini's
Sustainability First Writing Prize entry**





So, what does meaningful engagement look like? There is no single way to engage people. Approaches to engagement should respond to a particular issue or needs of a community. Degrees of engagement occur on a spectrum. At one end is one-way engagement, such as communicating or informing people. It can also be consulting people on issues predetermined by the decision-maker. At the other end lie deliberative and participatory approaches in which communities and decision-makers play equal roles in co-designing, co-producing and co-delivering outputs. These approaches are highly collaborative and are all about working partnerships.

Deliberative engagement

Deliberative approaches to engagement give people opportunities to 'share and test ideas through inclusive and respectful conversations'.¹¹³ These approaches go beyond informing or consulting, because they are about a two-way exchange of knowledge. In the context of climate change, this can enable deliberative planning for zero carbon.

Spotlight: Citizen Assemblies

Citizen assemblies involve a deliberate approach to engagement, and are 'one of a number of tools that can be used to ensure that there is diversity in the involvement of communities'.¹¹⁴ Citizens assemblies involve a group of people, selected to reflect the wider population, including varying attitudes to climate change. They are brought together to discuss an issue and reach a conclusion about what they think should happen'.¹¹⁵ The process has three phases:

- **Learning:** assembly members learn about issues, e.g. from researchers and people with lived experience
- **Deliberate:** discussion around the issues presented
- **Recommendations:** assembly members develop recommendations for decision-makers based on information and discussions they've heard

Citizen assemblies have shown how engaging the public on issues of climate change and net zero can lead to strong recommendations for delivering a fair climate future. The top recommendation that came out of the Citizens Climate Assembly 2020 was the need to educate and inform people more about climate change, given we all have a role to play. Read Sustainability First's response to the Citizens Climate Assembly conclusion in our blog: [What is Fair? – Ask the People](#).¹¹⁶

Chloe Uden, Art and Energy Collective

Moths to a Flame project, digital, 2021

Moths to a Flame is a mass-participation art project for COP26, presented by The Art and Energy Collective, sharing urgent messages of hope and encouragement for world leaders. The artwork will be displayed in Glasgow's Botanic Gardens and consists of over 20,000 handmade moths and messages from people all over the UK and further afield. It invites people to consider our charged relationship with energy systems through the symbol of the moth. Participants will also be invited to discover moths in their locality, to better understand the impact of human activity on biodiversity. The Art and Energy Collective are a group of artists, thinkers, makers and tinkerers exploring the space where art and energy meet, developing participatory arts projects in response to the climate emergency.

Other examples of deliberative engagement can be seen by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), which used deliberative workshops and citizens' juries to inform their 2021 report: *Fairness and Opportunity: A people-powered plan for the green transition*,¹¹⁷ and Involve and the Environment Agency's use of citizens' juries on the future of water management in the UK.¹¹⁸



'There could be more collaboration to have those conversations and those dialogues together ... and then you can build a bigger and better, more effective picture for how you plan for a more sustainable and inclusive future.'

Nikita Mistry, COP26 Unit, Cabinet Office



Leticia Valverdes

Terra Preta – Black Earth from the series 'And Now My Children Know', 40.6 x 50.8 cm, gold paint, earth, leaves, fire, blood, 2020.

Leticia's series 'And Now My Children Know' focuses on how the native Amazonian people have protected and lived in harmony with the forest for millennia. And how the forests and communities are under increasing threat from gold mining and agriculture, which brings diseases, pollution, forest fires and destruction of natural habitats. Her works are rooted in a deep love for the forest and its inhabitants, and knowledge of the geopolitical, social and environmental issues facing the region. The series has been created through interventions with her children on her Amazonian archive. Leticia was born in Brazil and has travelled between the UK and the Amazon for the past two decades as a photographer, artist and documentary maker.

Participatory engagement

Participation is the direct involvement of people in decision-making.¹¹⁹ Citizens play a more active role when processes are collaborative. From the start, citizens and communities are involved in deciding which issues to focus on and identifying solutions. Agendas are driven from the bottom-up and what communities think matters.

'It's all about communities being treated as experts ... it's about treating everyone completely equally, and valuing that knowledge equally, and building a kind of vision for the future together through that.'

Ellie Shipman, Participatory Artist

Participatory engagement recognises and values the assets, resources and lived experiences of communities.¹²⁰ Communities have agency and resourcefulness to produce innovative solutions.¹²¹ It is not only about engaging communities but empowering them. However, the burden for problem solving cannot be forced onto communities – political leaders, investors, corporates, policymakers and those with the resources and levers at a wider national and global level need to deliver action on many systems issues.¹²²

There are many types of participatory engagement. One example is 'participatory futures' – a range of approaches for engaging the public in developing visions or shaping potential futures, to inform actions in the present.¹²³ These approaches use art, technology, games and more to encourage people to play, create, and participate in future worlds and generate ideas.

Engagement for systems change

Engagement and collaboration are also crucial for systems change.

'If we are thinking about whole systems change, we need to think about how we collaborate and bring in all the different players and key stakeholders ... we all need to play our part, in terms of making sure that no one is left behind and that everyone benefits equally from the change.'

Afsheen Kabir Rashid, Repowering

Collaboration is also important between systems and across sectors. In the past, many organisations working on climate issues have worked in fragmented ways, treating environmental and social issues separately. But environmental issues and inequalities don't exist in a vacuum. Cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary collaboration is crucial to addressing systemic issues, and in uniting groups with different skills and experiences, across science, humanities and the arts.

Facilitating engagement

Numerous Writing Prize entrants proposed innovative ideas for community engagement and collective action. Through a short story, [Jacob Ashton](#) demonstrates how a model of collective, community ownership could help local communities respond to the impacts of climate change, equally sharing the costs and benefits. 'I like it, all of us being in it together. It's brought us closer together as a community, that's for sure. More trusting, more open.'

[Lola Grundmann's](#) essay 'A Case for Community' proposes various initiatives, including a government-funded community service scheme, tax reform to support communities, community-focused planning at building and neighbourhood levels incorporating decentralised resource management.

'To encourage long-term and purpose-driven value-creation in the private sector, companies must create community engagement groups to facilitate a meaningful conversation about, and understanding of, local needs and people's ideas of fairness.'

Extract from [Lola Grundmann's Sustainability First Writing Prize entry](#)

Act local

Communities are citizens with a shared or collective interest. Communities can either be identity-based or in a specific place or region. Where they are place-based, they are innately linked to their locale. Another strong, recurring recommendation that has come out of the Together for a Fair Climate Future programme, is that communities need to be at the heart of local decision-making.

'Communities are at the heart of change.'

Rachel Edwards, Tenant & Resident Strategy Group

Local involvement is important because local areas are not experiencing the climate crisis in the same way. Coastal areas at risk of rising sea levels face a different set of challenges to cities dealing with the urban heat island effect or communities historically reliant on high carbon economies. In addition, geographical inequalities intersect with other systemic and social inequalities and institutional factors, such as the unequal allocation of public resources. For example, communities need to be involved in shaping the net zero energy transition locally, with local people trained and supported to do the work.¹²⁴ This includes local area energy plans and the reintroduction of community energy strategies.¹²⁵

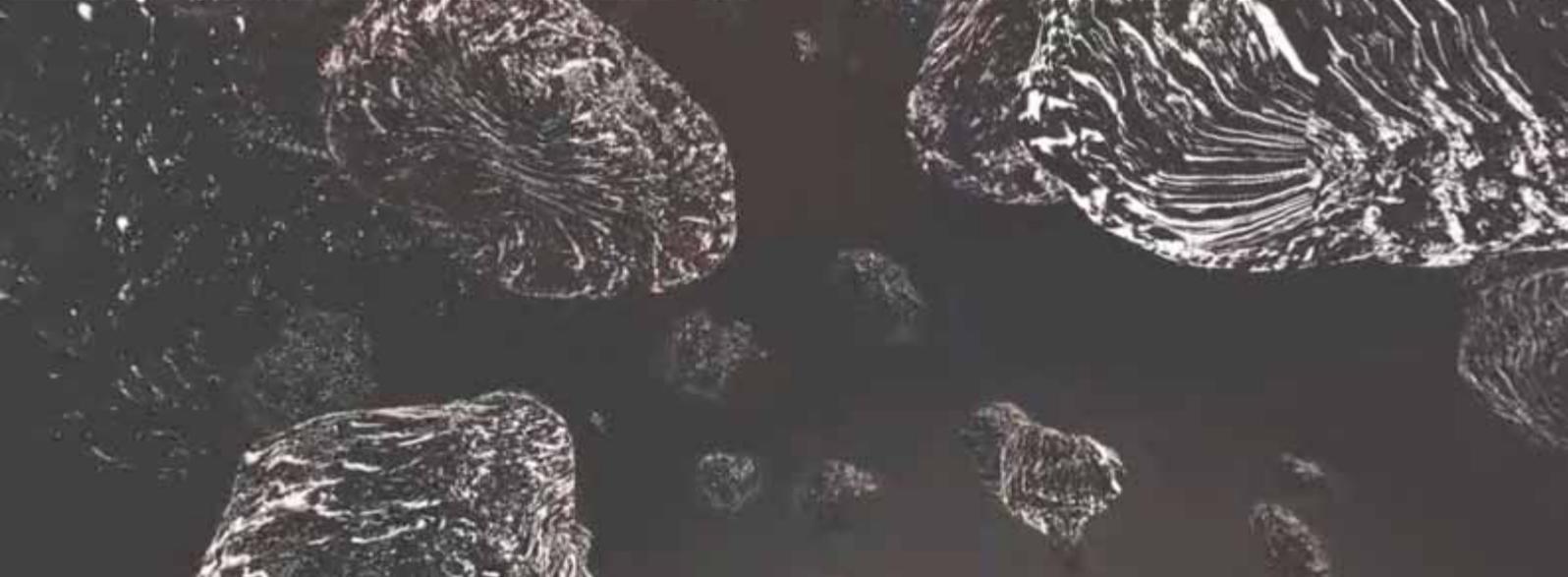
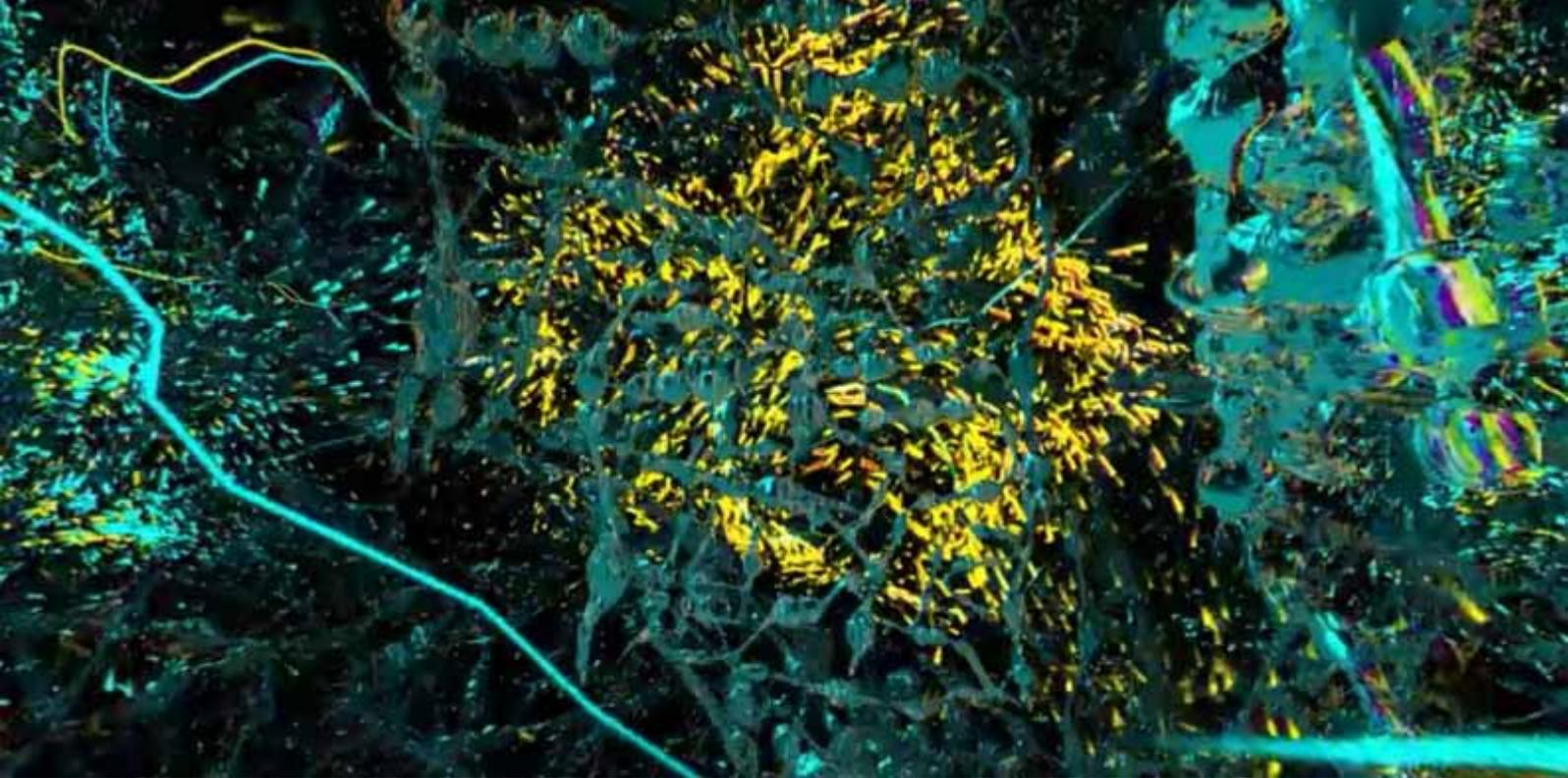
Local authorities understand local contexts and needs and can work with communities to find appropriate solutions. However, local authorities need to be adequately

resourced and empowered to incorporate both climate and fairness into their work. Many local leaders have called for additional central government funding and devolved powers to deliver the changes needed to adapt to the climate crisis.¹²⁶ Frequently, local authorities lack the funds, resources, or sometimes the in-house expertise, to tackle issues at the scale needed.¹²⁷

'[Local leaders] really understood community energy and understood that power needs to be given back to the people, so they are driving the agenda.'

Afsheen Kabir Rashid, Repowering

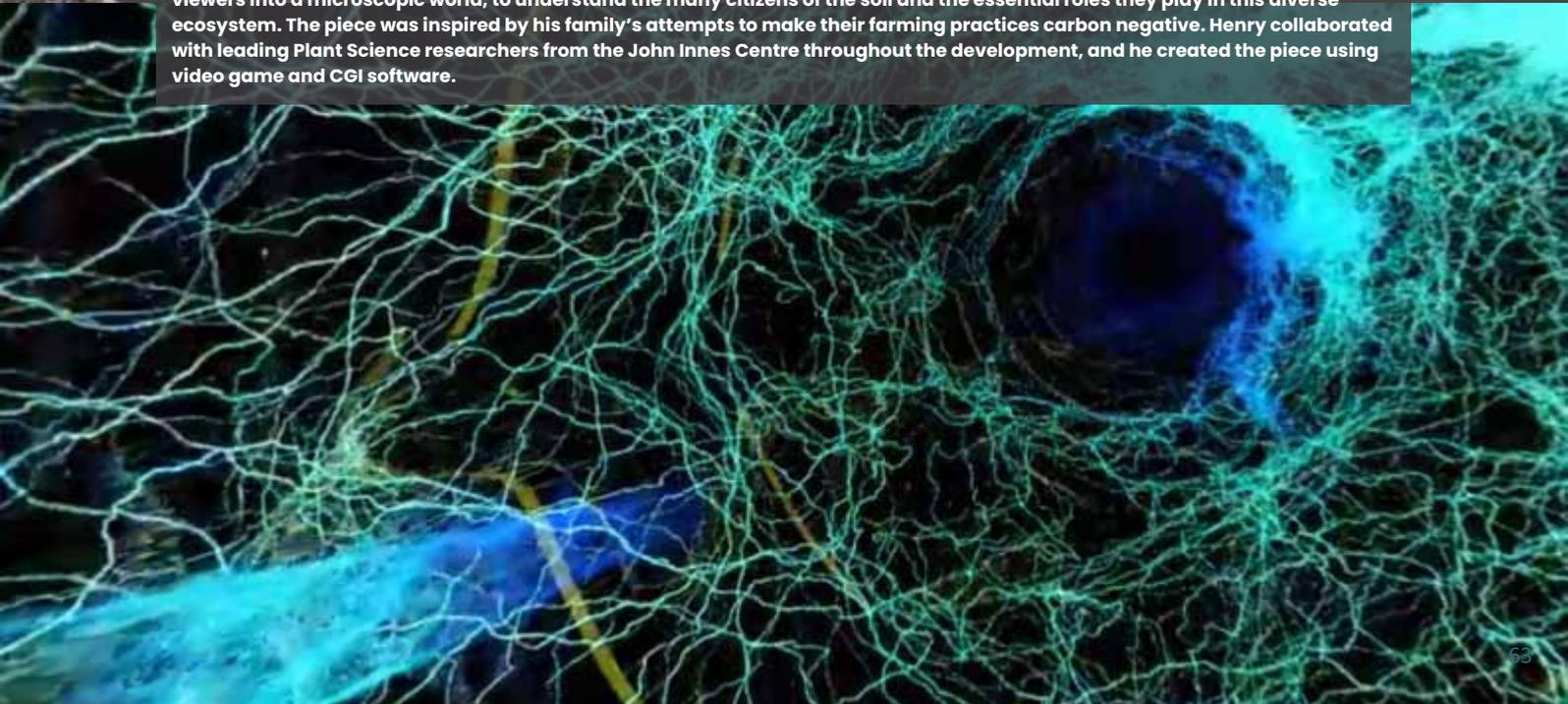
An example of local, place-based engagement is a project by the UCL Institute for Global Prosperity (IGP), called Rethinking Prosperity for London: When Citizens Lead Transformation.¹²⁸ The collaborative project explored what it means to prosper and live a good life for those living and working in east London. Working in three neighbourhoods to gather highly localised data, it was led by a team of IGP researchers and citizen scientists – local people recruited, trained and paid to work as social scientists in their communities. The project put citizens, communities and local knowledge at the heart of an agenda for transformative change, and drew attention to the need for policy actors to value lived experience and the importance of place.



Henry Driver

Secrets of Soil, 360-degree video, 2021

Henry creates interactive and playful artworks inviting audiences to dive into virtual worlds and take control. *Secrets of Soil* is an interactive digital journey that explores the hidden world of soil and its role in combating climate change. The experience takes viewers into a microscopic world, to understand the many citizens of the soil and the essential roles they play in this diverse ecosystem. The piece was inspired by his family's attempts to make their farming practices carbon negative. Henry collaborated with leading Plant Science researchers from the John Innes Centre throughout the development, and he created the piece using video game and CGI software.



Leadership for change

The final event in the Together for a Fair Climate Future discussion series explored what it means to lead positive change for a fair climate future. Leadership can mean many things. Although individual figurehead leaders, such as Greta Thunberg, can be important for inspiring people to create change, we must recognise multiple forms of leadership. The event made clear that leadership often needs to be collaborative to enable systems change. Leadership as distributed power can empower people to use their ideas and skills to contribute to wider changes. Models of collective leadership through networks have acted as a platform for other groups to act. The hugely catalytic youth movements, for example, have shifted the climate conversation from niche to mainstream.

What is clear is that *'Good climate leadership is action'* (Dr Mya-Rose Craig). Given the scale and pace need to respond to the climate emergency, leadership can no longer just mean conversation.

'By empowering the team ... they are shaping and driving the organisation forward, so we are all moving with a shared vision of where we want to get to and each one is empowered in their journeys to get there ... [I feel] empowered by my team in return as well.'

Afsheen Kabir Rashid, Repowering

Future leaders – educational outreach in schools

Through calls for 'climate justice' and 'systems change, not climate change', young people have been hugely successful in getting adults to talk more about climate change and what its impacts will mean for younger and future generations. Children and young people will inherit a changing world, and it is the responsibility of adults and decision-makers today to support them to develop knowledge, creativity, and skills to tackle climate action, whilst caring for the environment and each other. As well as teaching sustainability, the ways in which schools approach the wellbeing of staff and pupils is critical.

Sustainability First, in collaboration with the [Great Science Share for Schools](#), has developed a pilot series of workshop materials and activities on sustainability and climate action for primary schools to inspire, educate and engage pupils, all linked to the National Curriculum in England and Wales and Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland. They combine art, science, geography, literacy, social justice and citizenship in three areas of waste, water and the climate crisis.¹²⁹ Children and young people are leaders of the future, and also active agents of change today. Decision-makers need to foster intergenerational dialogue and actively engage young people in decision-making.

'Young people need to be empowered so that they can do things like this ... to campaign, to push for these things and thrive as adults and as future leaders. We will be the leaders of tomorrow, so please invest in us and please listen to what we say.'

Ishaa Asim, Activist and Speaker

Opposite: Harriet Hellman

Anthropocene Wave, 42 x 20 x 30 cm, stoneware and porcelain clay, 2020.

Harriet's practice is centred on her concerns with coastal erosion and rising sea levels. Her works celebrate imperfection and impermanence, while reflecting on ecological fragility. She often works in collaboration with the landscape and sea, using film to record her performative interactions with the unfired clay in the landscape. Taking some of her work to the coast, offering a deliberate exchange, returning some days later to see if any of the work has come back. Sometimes it has been transformed, 'a gift from the sea'. Harriet has a BA in Fine Art/Sculpture, a Ceramics Diploma at City Lit and an MA at the Royal College of Art, following a 16-year career in the film industry.





Maya Masuda

Nyoro-bara-pichapicha machines, variable (Site-specific), tapioca powder, glycerine, steel, electric components, jelly and water, 2021

Maya has created a series of machines that deviate from capitalistic desires and reconnect with local materials and environments. Her site-specific 'machines' contain local soil and materials, as well as local cooking methods, allowing the nature and culture of the region to intervene in their existence. In addition, the circuits running in the water are repeatedly connected and disconnected randomly under the influence of the local climate, humidity, and sunlight, and the machines accidentally appear and disappear. The artist in this work is not the 'controller' of the technology but the 'caregiver', observing the fragility of the 'machines' and their changing states. Maya is an artist and ecofeminist based in Japan and the UK.

Summary

It is critical that citizens are actively engaged in climate decision-making.

- The lack of diversity, including in ways of thinking, in the key sectors responsible for delivering net zero must be addressed. The environment sector also needs to proactively engage a wider range of citizens in response to the climate crisis in an inclusive and innovative way.
- Decision-makers must meaningfully involve citizens and communities in the transition to net zero and in the recovery from the pandemic. Participatory approaches to engagement, such as citizens' assemblies, enable the public to actively shape decisions, develop innovative ideas, and build public support for decarbonisation.
- People and communities with different lived experiences of climate change and social inequalities must inform the UK's climate response.
- Local authorities often have specific knowledge of local needs and inequalities; they must be adequately resourced and given powers to make change.
- Climate change, sustainability and ecology should feature more prominently in education/the national curriculum, both embedded across subjects but also in their own right, so young people can gain climate action skills.

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coexist



What is Rewilding?
Conservation aimed
at restoring and
protecting natural
processes, increased
biodiversity.

Buff-Tailed
Bumblebee



Dandelion



Rewilding is
a process of
ungardening.



Rewilding
The
Garden

Purple
Toadflax



cabbage
white



forget me not



Willowherb

Yarrow

Butterfly

Even if some parts
of the garden are
not rewilded,
the whole garden
will benefit.



REWILD
OUR
ATTITUDE

8. About Sustainability First

Sustainability First is a UK-based think tank that promotes practical, sustainable solutions to improve environmental, economic and social well-being. We are a registered charity that primarily works in the public utilities (such as energy, water and communications), and we have a long, proven track record of delivering impactful projects that help shape policy, regulation and company behaviour in utility sectors.

Our purpose is to drive fundamental change to promote and embed practical, evidence-based solutions for sustainability in UK essential services. Our aims are to:

- Shape agendas** Use our cutting-edge research and analysis to shape systems and approaches in sectors such as energy, water, and communications.
- Embed sustainability** Push thinking in new directions through informed engagement in UK public utilities.
- Connect, inspire, and engage** Through inclusive, collaborative, and creative engagement, bring about sustainable environmental, social, and cultural change in UK essential services.

This virtual book is part of an ongoing programme of work called Together for a Fair Climate Future. The next section provides an overview of this programme and the activities within it.

Sustainability First team

This virtual book has been put together by the Sustainability First team. It collates and summarises ideas and recommendations from across the Together for a Fair Climate Programme, which has brought together activists, artists, writers, academics, businesses, policymakers, utility companies, community organisers and others. Full credit must be attributed to contributors across the programme. Find a full list of acknowledgements in Annex D.

The views in this virtual book do not necessarily represent the views of Sustainability First, or its Associates.

Clare Dudeney, Associate, leads the Together for a Fair Climate Future programme. She has worked for 15 years on energy and climate change issues, including as Director of Strategic Policy at Energy UK, and co-led work on the Power Responsive programme. She is also a practising artist.

Alice Cross, Research Officer, works on the Together for a Fair Climate Future programme. She has worked in the charitable and philanthropic sectors in the areas of climate change research, global health, water & sanitation, and community and public engagement.

Sharon Darcy, Sustainability First Director, set up the New-Pin and Fair for the Future projects. Until February 2021 she was an Expert Panel member of the UK Regulator's Network and is currently a member of the British Academy's Public Policy Committee. Sharon is a previous Trustee and Risk Committee Chair of Nest, a Trustee of Which? and Board member of the SRA.





Siobhan McLaughlin, Glen Muick

Janine Duffy, Communications and Engagement Officer, is responsible for developing and implementing the organisation's communications strategy. She has worked within the third sector, primarily for international non-governmental organisations, in roles including communications and research.

Sonya Peres, Educational Outreach Officer, leads our educational outreach work. She is also the NUS Students Organising for Sustainability Programme lead for Scotland and has previously worked in higher and further education on the climate emergency.

Clare Davidson, freelance writer and editor, helped promote the Sustainability First Art & Writing Prizes, shortlist winners and provide editorial work. She was a journalist for ten years, covering issues including energy and sustainability. She is also a practising artist.

We would like to warmly thank the 300 plus entrants who submitted their excellent works of art and writing to the competition, our distinguished judging panels, the 75 plus contributors (both panellists and video contributors) to the discussion events, the academics, the programme engagement panel, National Grid, and others who have supported us in this work – and our fellow Associates for all their support. A full list of acknowledgements is in Annex D.

9. Together for a Fair Climate Future – Programme Overview

This virtual book has been informed by Sustainability First's Together for a Fair Climate Future programme. This programme started in January 2021 and has been funded by National Grid, as a Principal Partner for COP26.

The programme elements have included:

- a series of online discussion events
- educational outreach materials
- art and writing prizes
- a conference on social and systems change
- North Sea energy future artist residencies.

The Together for a Fair Climate Future has focused on how we can recover from the Covid-19 pandemic in a way that's fair, innovative and positive for the environment. It has developed visions for the future, suggestions to fundamentally shift to a more sustainable society, and partnerships to deliver lasting change.

The work has examined how climate change and fairness intersect, and what this means for climate action and policy in the UK.

By considering the wider social and cultural change needed, it supports the practical implementation of the UK's net zero commitment, including steps that individuals, communities, governments and business can take to change behaviour and systems to be more sustainable. Working with National Grid, these activities help shape the UK response to the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP26, in Glasgow in November 2021.

The programme elements are summarised below:

Together for a Fair Climate Future: A series of six discussion events

Sustainability First hosted a series of six online discussion events on how action for the climate crisis and fairness can come together as we recover from the pandemic. The six events delved into different areas:

Voices for the future – shared creative visions for a more sustainable future. It set out actions needed today and in years ahead to realise those visions. It discussed how to ensure that a diversity of views shapes the UK's response to the climate crisis and builds a fairer society.

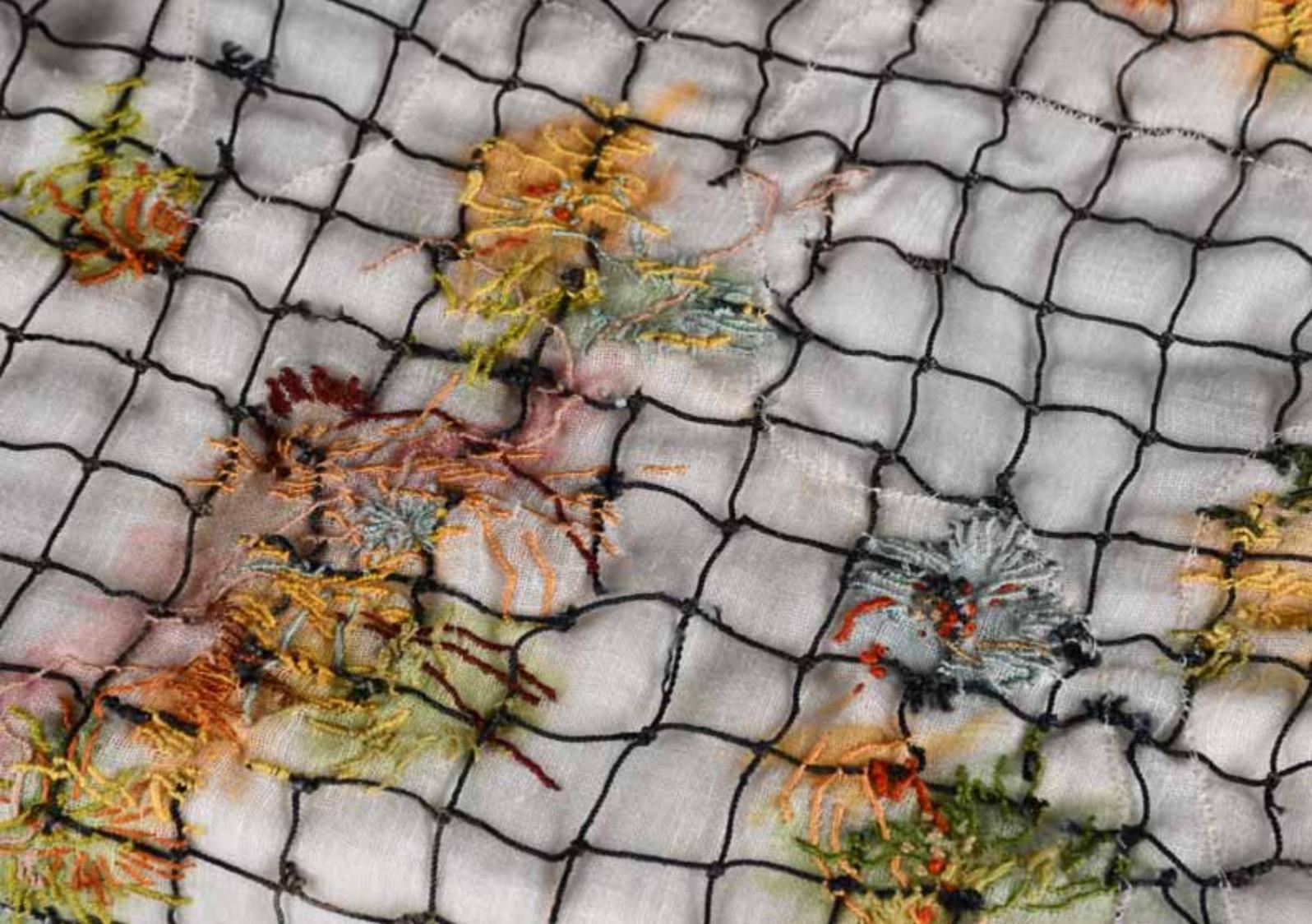
What do we value in society? – considered how social values may have shifted through the Covid-19 crisis and lockdowns, as well as what values we need to live sustainably and how these can be put into action.

How can we live more sustainably? – explored the social and environmental impacts of our actions as individuals and communities. It shared practical tips and ideas for living more sustainably as individuals, but also looked at how we link these with wider systems changes and the actions needed by business and government to support this change.

How do we tackle the unequal impacts of climate change? – looked at the impacts of climate and environment change for communities in the UK. It explored how these impacts are felt unequally and how injustices can be addressed. Contributors shared their lived experiences and offered recommendations for change.

Can technology be a force for good in delivering a fair climate future? – looked at the role of delivering a fair climate future, and what the barriers or risks are. Speakers shared their experiences using technology as a way to act on social and fairness issues, but raised concerns that technology can only be a force for good if accessible to everyone.

Leadership for change – asked what it means to lead positive change for a fair climate future, exploring different types of leadership and the areas in which leadership is urgently needed. The event shared people's experience of leading positive change, across youth movements, business, the creative arts and community, and discussed what strong leadership looks like. A key message was that we need to ensure leadership leads to action at the scale and pace to address the climate emergency.



Above: Laurane Le Goff, *Dance The Amazon*

Across the events, we heard from over 75 panellists and video contributors, including activists, artists, writers, academics, businesses, policymakers, utility companies, community organisers and others, sharing expertise, lived experiences, ideas and practical recommendations for inclusive change. Together, these activities help build understanding, public acceptability, and legitimacy.

All the events can be watched on Sustainability First's YouTube channel. The events have been viewed over 2,000 times on YouTube.

Short briefing papers focusing on how to enact change in these areas can be found on our website.

Educational outreach

Sustainability First have developed a pilot series of workshop materials and activities on sustainability and climate action to inspire, educate and engage pupils, teachers and staff on living sustainably and enacting change for a more resilient future – exploring issues such as waste, water, energy, climate action and leadership.

Each workshop is led by pupils' curiosity, showing how their views matter. Workshops combine lessons and tasks on art, science, geography, literacy, social justice, and citizenship, and encourage students to develop visions for a sustainable future and to think about what they can do in their own lives and schools to enable change.

The workshop activities are linked to the National Curriculums for England and Wales, and the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland, and produced in partnership with existing teachers' networks. They are targeted at Key Stage 2, and Second Level pupils but can also be adapted for younger and older pupils.

For each workshop there is an online package, which includes an illustrated video, creative tasks, and opportunities to share ideas, questions, and answers. The three workshop packages are:

[Let's get wise about waste](#) – explores why we produce waste, its impact on people and the planet, and how to cut waste and reuse materials.

[Our changing world](#) – focuses on the climate crisis and its consequences. It explores the connections we have with the planet and why and how we should care for nature and each other.

[The wonders of water](#) – explores the necessity of health and sustainable water systems, looking at the impact of unsustainable behaviours on wildlife and how to take action to save water and ensure healthy rivers and oceans.

Sustainability First collaborated with The Great Science Share for Schools, which reached 90,000 students in 2021.

Sustainability First are also working directly with secondary schools to develop in-depth workshops on climate leadership, air quality, and sustainable energy, to be published later in 2021.

For more information, visit the schools section of the Sustainability First website:

<https://www.sustainabilityfirst.org.uk/sustainable-futures-schools-outreach>

Sustainability First Art and Writing Prizes 2021

Building on the success of the Sustainability First Art and Essay Prizes in 2020, Sustainability First ran these creative competitions again in 2021, ahead of COP26, on the theme Together for a Fair Climate Future. The theme brought together the climate crisis, fairness in society, and how we work together to achieve a more sustainable future.

The competitions enabled Sustainability First to crowd-source innovative imagery, ideas and recommendations from people across the UK, which have shaped and fed into both this virtual book and the conference on social and systems change that took place in September 2021.

Sustainability First worked alongside two high-profile judging panels, with expertise in the visual arts, writing and sustainability. We ran a live prize-giving as part of the online conference in September, an online exhibition, and produced this virtual book.

Art and creativity are important to grapple with uncertainty, visualise possible futures, and provide arresting images and stories that speak to hearts as well as minds.

First prize for the Art Prize went to [Gina Allen](#). Gina works in collaboration with researchers, technologists and individuals who have experienced tangible impacts of environmental issues, aiming to 'make the invisible visible'. *Vivacity* is a portrait of Ella Kissi-Debrah, who died at the age of nine having suffered with extremely severe asthma. Ella has since become the first person in the world to have air pollution legally recognised as a cause of death. Gina made the series of images showing Ella across her too short lifetime, which show her vivacity as well as her increasing illness.

First prize for the Writing Prize went to [Jacob Ashton](#) for *Eels and Reeds* – a creative short story set in the future from the perspective of a narrator who fishes for eels in the Fens. The narrator recounts changes in the environment, biodiversity and community resulting from a carbon sequestration project that has changed the local landscape and livelihoods from farming to fishing. The narrator appraises the project and accompanying models of collective land ownership and the impacts for local people, nature and land.

'This immediately brought forth a wave of emotions that I couldn't hold back. Powerful. Gina used particulate matter to create this work, which is incredibly poignant considering the context. Ella's story is heart-breaking. Her mother advocating so tirelessly to get this issue put on her death certificate, was just monumental – but it shouldn't have to take a tragedy to do what's best for people and planet. Change can happen, and that can give us some hope, but we have to act now to prevent more lives being cut short.'

Charise Johnson, Art Prize judge

'The piece stayed with me for days after I'd read it. The imprint it left was sensory in both a practical and experiential sense.'

Serayna Solanki, Writing Prize judge

For more information, visit the Prizes 2021 section of the Sustainability First website:

<https://www.sustainabilityfirst.org.uk/prizes-2021>

Online conference – Shake up the System

In September 2021, Sustainability First held an online conference over two dates called: Shake up the System: How do we achieve meaningful change in society for a fair climate future?

The conference explored how behavioural, societal, and cultural changes can link to achieve meaningful systems change in the UK to address the climate crisis and develop a fairer society. It brought together learning and experience from across sectors to identify common barriers and enablers to help all actors progress in their work. Academics, activists, artists, communicators, community groups, companies, policymakers, regulators and others shared their insights and experiences of how change happens at these different levels, how social movements develop, and their ideas for the systems changes needed for a fair climate future.

The conference built on the themes, ideas, and recommendations that came out of the discussion events and entries for the Sustainability First Art and Writing Prizes. It highlighted major areas of focus in the lead up to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP26, in Glasgow and helped maintain momentum for change.

North Sea energy future artist residencies

An open call will go out in early 2022 for artists to develop visionary works on the North Sea Energy Future. Three artists will be selected and commissioned to produce original artworks. A stipend will be offered to successful artists for site visits so that they can build an understanding of the different technologies and network infrastructure in this world-leading energy centre and meet with coastal communities. Site visits and hosting would be social-distancing permitting.

This opportunity will be open to UK-based artists, who would ideally consider different aspects of developments in the North Sea, such as the technologies, ocean ecology and wildlife provisions, and engage coastal communities to tell their stories and rich history. Different media will be accepted, from painting, sculpture, photography, sound/oral history or digital. Artworks will be exhibited online and through a publication.

The following section ('Next Steps – During and Post COP26') outlines how we will be taking the Together for a Fair Climate Future work to COP26 and beyond. It explains how this programme fits into our wider work.

Below: Laura Hopes, Martin Hampton, Léonie Hampton (Still/Moving Projects), To be heard (Newlyn Harbour)



10. Next Steps – During and Post COP26

Sustainability First is working in partnership with others and using its position as an independent charity and trusted convenor in essential services to drive action in the UK on climate and fairness issues by government, regulators and businesses.

During COP26

National Grid, sponsor of the Together for a Fair Climate Future project, is also a Principal Partner for COP26. National Grid will have a presence at the International Climate Conference in Glasgow in November 2021 and will be well-placed to share this book and other materials and outputs from this programme with delegates and networks.

Sustainability First and National Grid will be announcing the winner of the People's Choice Art and Writing Prize Winners at COP26. The overall prize-winners, as chosen by the high-profile judging panels, were announced on 22 September 2021, along with the launch of the People's Choice award. This award was an opportunity for the public to vote online for their favourite artworks and pieces of writing from our shortlist.

Sustainability First will also be sharing outputs of the programme with our networks and contacts to maximise impact. This will include sending copies of this virtual book to UK government, COP26 representatives, and other key UK climate stakeholders before the conference, highlighting our recommendations.



Post COP26

COP26 cannot be the end of discussion about a fair climate future. Momentum must be maintained after the conference, and targets and commitments must be pursued, put into action and implemented in a timely way.

Delivering on net zero will be a long-haul. It won't be straightforward and there will be challenges. However, there are significant opportunities to build a fairer and greener world for all. In the Together for a Fair Climate Future programme, we heard the calls for action now and the passion, ideas, and creativity – as well as determination – to put this into practice. We want to build on these valuable relationships and networks, to push for a fair climate future after the conference.

Sustainability First will be taking recommendations from the Together for a Fair Climate Future programme forward. We will use the recommendations to share our approaches and priorities, for example in the development of a Sustainable Energy Futures Forum (see below). In all our policy work, where we seek to embed sustainability and develop new thinking, we will use these recommendations to frame and inform proposals for specific actors.

Some of the areas Sustainability First will be working on post-COP26 include:

- **Ensuring no one is left behind:** We will seek to ensure that those who are unable to afford green and smart technologies, or for other reasons can't access them, receive the necessary support and that the costs and benefits of decarbonisation are shared fairly. We will push, along with other NGOs, to ensure the UK's response to the climate crisis actively involves local communities, and for any levelling-up to devolve power and money to regions – particularly when transitioning away from carbon-intensive activities – to develop vibrant green economies and good jobs in areas most impacted.
- **Inclusive change:** Working with energy regulator Ofgem, we will establish a [Sustainable Futures Energy Forum](#) to engage those groups currently under-represented in energy decision-making – including young people, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled people, and those already experiencing climate impacts – and provide a platform for them to shape future policy, regulation and corporate agendas. We will also be running a [North Sea – Artist Residency Programme](#), which will work with artists and communities along the North Sea coast who are being impacted by the energy transition to develop visions for a greener and more sustainable future.
- **Equipping the next generation for change:** We will evaluate our 2021 Together for a Fair Climate Future educational outreach activity and consider how energy and other utilities can best work with schools on climate and sustainability issues.
- **Intergenerational fairness:** We will push government to provide clarity to policymakers about the imperative to consider the interests of future generations in decision-making and to consider wider co-benefits in assessing actions to support net zero.
- **Cultural change for a sustainable future:** We will continue to work with government actors and utility companies to embed sustainability in the energy, water and communications sectors by designing and using a principles-based approach to support the cultural change now taking place.
- **Ensuring a just transition:** We will carry forward our partnership with National Grid in this area.
- **Delivering net zero and building resilience to climate impacts:** We will continue to use our in-depth expertise in the energy and other utility sectors to drive change in policy and regulatory frameworks, and incentives to ensure that UK climate action takes place at the scale and pace needed.

If you would like to collaborate with Sustainability First in working towards a fair climate future, please do get in touch. Please contact Sustainability First's Director, Sharon Darcy, at sharon.darcy@sustainabilityfirst.org.uk



Sustainability First Art Prize 2021

We received over 250 entries to the Art Prize, varying in scale, media and subject but all responding to the theme Together for a Fair Climate Future. We asked entrants to do at least one of the following:

- Look at the relationship between the climate crisis and fairness in society
- Set out visions for a fairer and more sustainable future
- Explore working together or collectively to achieve these visions
- Explore what meaningful changes are needed and how to put these into action
- Draw from personal experience.

This Annex summarises the prize-winning and shortlisted artwork. To view our online exhibition, visit the Sustainability First website.

Gina Allen (1st Prize, Shortlisted)

Nerissa Cargill (2nd Prize, Shortlisted)

Joe Habben (Joint 3rd Prize, Shortlisted)

Maya Masuda (Joint 3rd Prize, Shortlisted)

Stella Arion (Shortlisted)

Stephen Bennett (Shortlisted)

Helen Birnbaum (Shortlisted)

Camilla Brendon (Shortlisted)

Caroline Burrows (Shortlisted)

Henry Driver (Shortlisted)

Beverley Duckworth (Shortlisted)

Hester Ellis (Shortlisted)

Liz Elton (Shortlisted)

Rachna Garodia (Shortlisted)

Nigel Goldsmith (Shortlisted)

Eilidh Guthrie (Shortlisted)

Harriet Hellman (Shortlisted)

Adonia Hirst (Shortlisted)

Laura Hopes (Shortlisted)

Eva Joy Lawrence (Shortlisted)

Gwen Sion (Shortlisted)

Natalia Szumiec (Shortlisted)

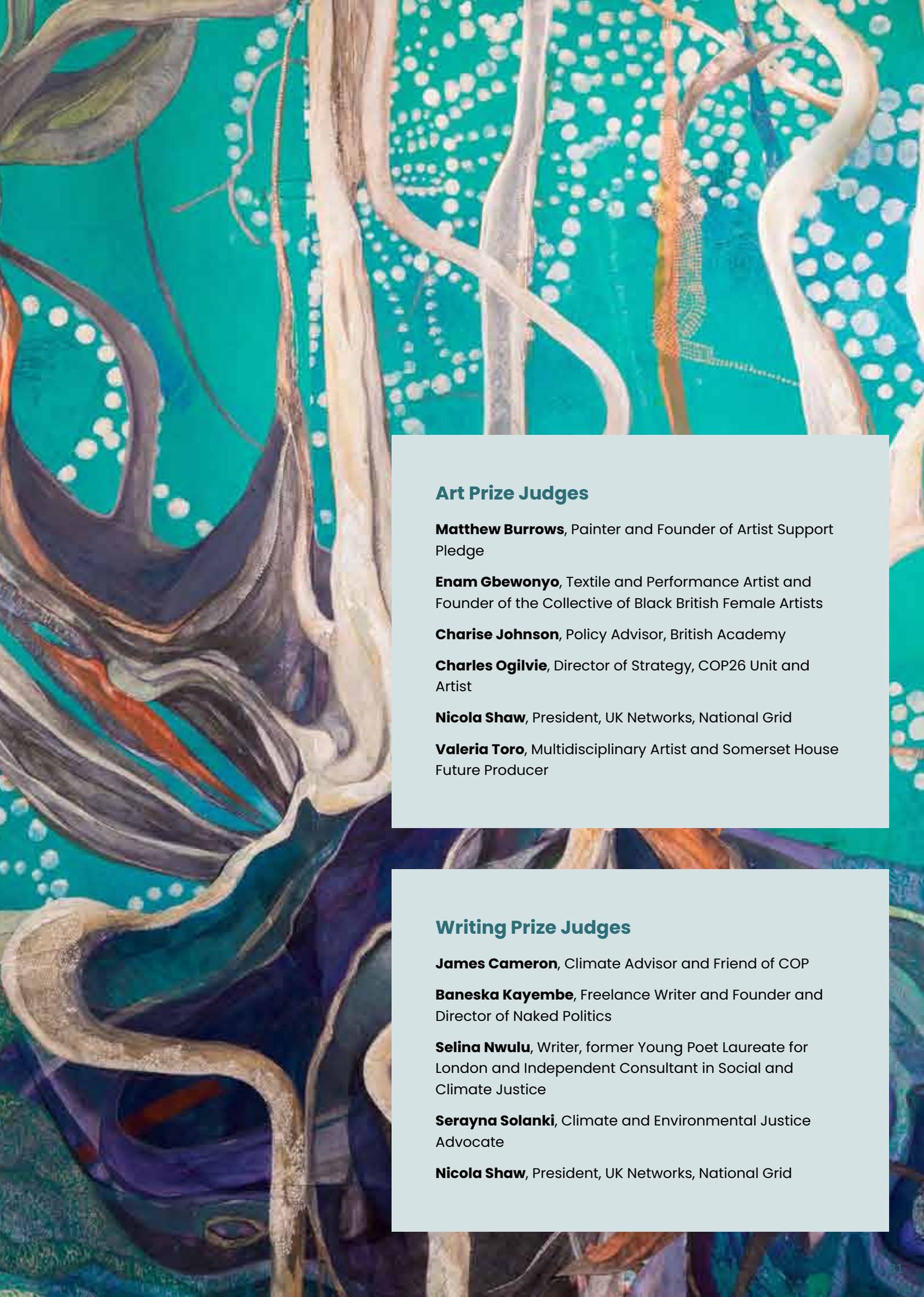
Chloe Uden (Shortlisted)

Leticia Valverdes (Shortlisted)





Bryony Bengel Abbott, *Wood Church*



Art Prize Judges

Matthew Burrows, Painter and Founder of Artist Support Pledge

Enam Gbewonyo, Textile and Performance Artist and Founder of the Collective of Black British Female Artists

Charise Johnson, Policy Advisor, British Academy

Charles Ogilvie, Director of Strategy, COP26 Unit and Artist

Nicola Shaw, President, UK Networks, National Grid

Valeria Toro, Multidisciplinary Artist and Somerset House Future Producer

Writing Prize Judges

James Cameron, Climate Advisor and Friend of COP

Baneska Kayembe, Freelance Writer and Founder and Director of Naked Politics

Selina Nwulu, Writer, former Young Poet Laureate for London and Independent Consultant in Social and Climate Justice

Serayna Solanki, Climate and Environmental Justice Advocate

Nicola Shaw, President, UK Networks, National Grid

We received over 60 writing submissions, covering many different writing styles – including poetry, short stories, personal accounts, articles and essays – responding to the question:

‘How do we achieve meaningful social changes in the UK to tackle the climate crisis and develop a fairer society?’

We asked entrants to look at both climate change and fairness in society. We also invited suggestions for how to challenge existing structures and achieve wider behavioural, social, cultural and/or systems changes.

This Annex summarises the prize-winning and shortlisted pieces of writing. To read the full pieces, click on the hyperlinks.

Jacob Ashton – Eels and Reeds (1st Prize)

Eels and Reeds is a creative, short story set in the future from the perspective of a narrator who fishes for eels in the Fens. The narrator recounts changes in the environment, biodiversity and community that have resulted from a carbon sequestration project that has changed the local landscape and livelihoods from farming to fishing. The narrator appraises the project and accompanying models of collective land ownership and the impacts for local people, nature and land.

Lola Grundmann – A Case for Community (2nd Prize)

A Case for Community is an essay that places building strong and purposeful communities at the core of the answer to the prize’s question about achieving meaningful social changes in the UK to tackle the climate crisis and develop a fairer society. The essay proposes several solutions: a nation-wide community service scheme, strengthening welfare systems and tax reform, community-centred planning and urban design, and greater involvement of communities in decision-making and policy formation.

Claire Pickard – Hydromancy (Highly commended)

Hydromancy is a personal account of the lived experience of flooding in the UK. The account starts with the rain falling and after the destruction of the flood it follows the story of those affected – from coming together as a community to support one another, to responding to the flood plans of local authorities and environment agencies, to the building of new flood defences, all ending in more flooding. The account is enriched by indigenous cultural and philosophical references, folklore, and how rain is regarded culturally around the world.

Sally Cairns – The Wrong Solution (3rd Prize)

The Wrong Solution is a short story set in a courtroom in the future. It is a cautionary tale in which Established Economies are being tried on three counts: that they were fully aware of the potential threat of climate change; that there was sufficient evidence that they should have taken more action; and that they could have prevented what has happened by doing so. The story imagines a future facing severe impacts from climate change and suggests actions that should have been taken to mitigate those impacts, from green jobs to nature-based solutions.

Kate Pellegrini – Twelve (It’s About Time) (Highly commended)

Twelve is a poem of 12 verses, of 12 lines each, listing selected global and weather events in terms of ecological and climate collapse. Each verse refers to a year when named storms, wildfires, record heatwaves, etc. hit parts of the globe between 2015, when the Paris Agreement was signed, and 2020. For the years 2021 to 2027 an alternative scenario unrolls, in which sustainable and regenerative practices replace carbon intensive industries, creating a new global economy of mitigation through cooperation and hope for the future.



Above: Zillah Bowes, *Allowed*

Susie Fox May – Feeling Flat (Shortlisted)

Feeling Flat is a short story that imagines a conversation from the perspective of two cars and a bicycle in a car park. Through the vehicles' conversation, the story touches on multiple issues concerning transport, carbon emissions and fairness, such as who should pay to subsidise measures such as electric cars, and whether adaptations to individual behaviour change should be the focus, compared to wider systemic and infrastructural change.

Rachel Gorry – Small Change (Shortlisted)

Small Change is a short story about two old friends meeting over coffee. The story introduces the two characters, their lifestyles and their different financial situations. From the perspective of the character Cathy, the story looks at the different ways both characters are changing their behaviours to be 'greener', their motivations and the types of changes that are accessible to both characters, such as 'expensive reusable cups may be out of reach of her time and budget, [but] she could still try to make some smaller changes'.

Janice Ng – How do we achieve meaningful social changes in the UK to tackle the climate crisis and develop a fairer society? (Shortlisted)

This essay delves into the two issues of (1) transport decarbonisation and (2) the unequal impacts of heat to answer the remit about achieving meaningful changes in the UK to tackle the climate crisis and develop a fairer society. In the area of transport, the essay proposes a number of ideas for emissions reductions, including behaviour and social changes needed to support the transition to electric vehicles and promoting active travel. In the area of heat, the essay proposes a number of policy measures to support those disproportionately impacted by the consequences of extreme heat.

- The prizes were open to all living British and international visual artists/writers and international visual artists/writers living, working or studying in the UK, over the age of 18 years.
- The judges' decisions were final, and no correspondence could be entered into.
- The Art Prize entailed an internal sifting round and then the longlisted entries were judged by the panel.
- The Writing Prize entailed two internal sifting rounds and then judging shortlisted entries (on an anonymous basis) by the panel.
- Any entrant known to the assessor had their submission reviewed by another member of the team or panel.
- By entering the competition, entrants agreed that their piece of writing could be published on Sustainability First's and National Grid's websites or in other publications, including in a virtual book of commended competition entries. Quotes and extracts could also appear in other Sustainability First and National Grid communications, including, but not limited to, publications and social media. Published works and any quoted extracts from these would always be attributed to the author.
- Artists will allow Sustainability First and National Grid to use submitted photographs and videos in ongoing communications. This could include, but is not limited to, the promotion of the exhibition, activities at COP26 (e.g. catalogue, press and publicity).

Full Terms and Conditions: <https://www.sustainabilityfirst.org.uk/terms-conditions>



First, our sincere thanks to National Grid, sponsor of the Together for a Fair Climate Future project. In particular, Duncan Burt, Louise Clark and Loren Cowling.

A huge thank you to the 75 plus panellists and video contributors who participated across the six online discussion events. From sharing experiences of the impacts of climate in the UK or practical tips on how to live more sustainably and lead positive change for society and the environment, to recommending how to better engage communities in the climate response in the UK or to ensure technology acts as a force for good and how to put values into practice in our local communities, contributors' ideas and recommendations have informed the structure and content of this virtual book and the actions Sustainability First will be taking to COP26 and beyond.

Thank you to the hundreds of entrants who submitted their work to the Sustainability First Art and Writing Prizes 2021. We received such a wide range of imaginative visions for the future, creative ideas and practical steps for societal change, all responding to the theme of Together for a Fair Climate Future. Thank you also to the institutions and organisations who kindly distributed the entry details of both prizes, publicising them on their own social media, webpages, newsletters and mailing lists.

A huge thank you to members of both sets of judges for giving so much time to reviewing, scoring and engaging in discussion about the entries to decide on our winners.

Thank you to The Great Science Share for Schools for collaborating on our educational outreach in primary schools, to our workshop contributors, and to the teachers and pupils who have taken part in our workshops.

Thank you to everyone who attended the Shake Up the System online interactive conference in September 2021, both panellists and participants, who shared their ideas and experiences of making systems change happen in practice, identifying how to link different levels and flows of systems change, and recommendations for key actions for a fair climate future.

Thank you to all the members of Sustainable Futures Engagement Panel for sharing your expertise and experience in social and climate issues, providing guidance and feedback, and shaping the Together for a Fair Climate Future programme. The Engagement Panel was convened by Sustainability First to promote diversity, equality and inclusion in the Together for a Fair Climate Future programme.

Finally, thank you to Sustainability First's Associates and team, industry representatives and expert contacts who have supported the Together for a Fair Climate Future programme and have given feedback on the contents of this virtual book and other programme outputs.



Contact us

We would welcome your feedback. If you have any comments or would like to discuss Sustainability First's Together for a Fair Climate Future programme and how you can get involved with this – please contact Sustainability First's Director, Sharon Darcy, at sharon.darcy@sustainabilityfirst.org.uk

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