Together for a Fair Climate Future

Event 2 Summary: What do we value in society?

9 March 2021, 1:00 – 2:15pm



Live event illustration: William Bock – Visual Scribe

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 more sustainably and how these can be put into action.

The ideas in this document are those of the panellists and video contributors - full credit must be attributed to them. Find out more about the speakers at the end of this summary.

> *[The pandemic] has definitely made us have to consider, prioritise, and appreciate what is important in our lives. It allowed us to laser focus and put our values to the test.* – Dylan Nagan

Five Values for Living Sustainably

Wellbeing is 'how we are doing' as individuals, communities, and as a nation, and how sustainable that is for the future. We need a centring of social and ecological wellbeing, compassion and happiness. This requires a greater focus on how we care for each other,

physical & mental health, relationships, community cohesion, fairness, and the wellbeing of future generations. The following values are all important for good wellbeing.

> *What wellbeing allows us to do, is expand the range of options available for tackling climate change.* – Nancy Hey

Deep connections with others. The current values that underpin society overemphasise competition and underemphasise cooperation. To move away from this, we need to build relationships, shared understandings, and social trust. During the pandemic, people have been connecting and engaging with each other in new ways, which has brought communities together and made us more resilient. The crisis has made us realise our interconnections, responsibilities and the need to work and collaborate together. Connections with others and a sense of community strengthens solidarity and helps us feel part of something bigger than ourselves.

> *The pandemic has forced us to stop and think once again to be humanly, and provided us an opportunity to sit back and think in a creative way how we can start a fresh start, to live a sustainable healthier life, and give a greener sustainable future for next generations* – Tatheer Fatima

Good jobs, livelihoods, and a sense of purpose. Jobs and livelihoods are important for the things that support our lives, local community resilience and our sense of purpose. During the pandemic, many people found that work was positive for their wellbeing. We need to consider the lived experience of diverse communities across the UK.

Connecting with and valuing nature. We have undervalued nature and forgotten our origins. We must get better at understanding natural systems if we are to truly value nature and live more sustainably; without saying everything has to be turned into financial value. Green spaces are valuable economically, but they are also important for health, wellbeing, and quality of life. Green space, biodiverse spaces, and blue spaces are some of the happiest places we can be. But green spaces *must* be more accessible and they can perform multiple functions including for climate change adaptation (e.g. reducing heat stress).

Creativity and innovation. Creativity is needed to innovate, expand and problem solve – to find solutions we didn't know were there. Creativity brings dynamism to our lives, the flexibility we need to cope with ongoing change, positivity and hope. Creativity thrives in times of adversity and helps us be more resilient. The environmental crisis has forced us to generate greener, creative ideas to support families, communities, cities, as well as people in need. Constraints can shift our mindset and force us to be creative, identifying new and often circular solutions that help us move beyond a waste mindset.

> *In times of conflict, one has to be creative, and the climate change issue is precisely one of those examples. …We have boundaries – environmental, physical, atmospheric – but the constraint itself is creative, it produces an opportunity to innovate* – James Cameron

Eight Action Points

Promote change through conversations about values and what's important.

Once we understand a technical or scientific problem (e.g. climate change, biodiversity, pollution) and have the solutions and resources to know change can happen; the next step is finding the motivating force to say change is necessary and possible. To inspire people to change their habits, take responsibility and make sustainable action possible, we need to appeal to things that matter most to them, their underlying values.

Put values into action in our local communities and through ongoing education.

Community level activities that put these values into practice – whether this be community gardening, locally-owned food growing projects, digital training or creative workshops – will improve wellbeing and sustainability in the long run. Build on community connections developed throughout the pandemic and start with what you can do or create yourself at home or in your community. Education for sustainability needs to be relatable to local issues to help people see what's at stake and to build a sense of hope and agency for change.

> *These are basic things. We need to work with kids as well as community people regardless of their age. That can create a different city map for a greener future.* – Tatheer Fatima

Climate solutions need to consider jobs, income, and employment. Our work is important for our sense of purpose and achievement, as well as meeting basic needs and supporting our livelihoods. Climate responses need to make sure people can continue to work to support themselves but also have a sense of purpose and achievement from their work, or from volunteering. And responses need to be contextually and locally relevant.

Examine the economic models that underpin our society. Do we use the weight of the current system to change its direction (such as changing where we invest our pensions and savings), or can we restructure our economies to be regenerative and distributive by design, working in service of social justice on a healthy planet? We need to rethink the purpose of government and actively consider and test models such as doughnut economics and the wellbeing economy. Changing the principles that underpin economic policy is a good place to start.

Reposition GDP amongst other ways to value and measure our performance as a society, such as around happiness and mental health, and delivering positive climate and nature-based outcomes. Build on existing analysis on measuring performance and progress using quality of life indexes and wellbeing and sustainability metrics. If in doubt, ask people what matters to them.

> *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

Use these metrics to redirect investment. We need metrics to redirect the flow of investment into the kind of society we want to live in in the future. Build social trust by investing in what is important – including natural capital, social capital and economic capital – in a way that's inclusive and sustainable.

Make use of the law and legislation to put values into practice. The law can provide a structure and reference point for decision making in society. Learn from initiatives in New Zealand (Living Standards Framework) and Wales (The Rights of the Child, Wellbeing of Future Generations Act) on how legislation can provide a basis for wellbeing budgets and frame how we deal directly with fairness, justice, and intergenerational equity and build a supportive culture for sustainable change.

Design public spaces in ways that are accessible and incorporate our values.

The design of public space needs to take into account environmental impact, economic impact and prosperity, but also social impact. Design needs to incorporate our values: how do spaces and places affect our social connection, how do they impact on our happiness and wellbeing, and are green spaces accessible to all?

Panellists



James Cameron – Senior Climate Advisor, Friend of COP

An award-winning recognised authority in the global climate change movement, James is an advocate for sustainability and a catalyst for galvanising change where it has the biggest impact on environmental challenges globally. A qualified Barrister with 30+ years' experience across legal (Baker & McKenzie), academic (Yale, University of Oxford, Imperial College London, Overseas Development Institute), business (Climate Change Capital, Pollination Global, Systemiq, Tulchan, Solarcentury), Government (UK Prime Minister's Business Advisory Group, COP22, COP23, COP26), and advisory roles (NESTE, Heathrow 2.0, AVAIO Capital), James is uniquely placed to advise on the complex challenges that hinder progress to a more sustainable future.



Tatheer Fatima – Project Coordinator, Climate Challenge Fund, Networking Key Services, Edinburgh.

Coming from the very northern region of Pakistan (Gilgit-Baltistan). Moved to Edinburgh, UK in 2016. I have completed my engineering degree in 2009, worked in the research department, at the Consumer Rights Commission of Pakistan (CRCP) and helped the department in carrying out research activities on energy, environment, policymaking and policy implementation in Pakistan

in the sector for four years. Joined NKS in 2017, and serving NKS for its Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) project since 2018. My seven years of experience in the field gives me a strong understanding of community behaviour and how it can be improved to be more sustainable in future. At NKS, we are dealing with tasks related to travel, waste, energy and edible garden project in the south Asian Community, in Edinburgh.



Nancy Hey – Executive Director, What Works Centre for Wellbeing
Nancy Hey is a global leader in the field of wellbeing. Prior to setting up the What Works Centre for Wellbeing, she worked in the UK Civil Service in nine departments as a policy professional and coach, delivering cross UK Government policies including on constitutional reform. She has worked with the UK's top civil servants to introduce wellbeing into public policy and to establish the professional policy community in the UK. She is currently specialist advisor on wellbeing to the UK House of Lords Life After Covid Inquiry into wellbeing impacts on the acceleration of digital of the pandemic.



Dylan Ngan – Philosophy Undergraduate, University College London and Join Second-Prize, Sustainability First Essay Competition 2020
I'm a 3rd Year University Student studying BA Philosophy at University College London. My interests are focused on the philosophy of self and persons, in order to "know thyself". From the metaphysics of identity, to personhood, morality, to epistemology and perception, I wish not only to satisfy a joy of discovery, but I also want to examine what it means to be a person, to live well, and what it means to be good. Therefore, I want to explore and critically analyse our values. I write and publish both nonfiction and fictional pieces and have made publications surrounding individuality, racial equality and justice, feminism, aesthetics, and sustainability.

Video Contributors

We are also grateful for video contributions from:

- **Mrs Indumati Pandya, Mrs Aruna Dhall, Izazur Rahman,** and **Mr Jitu Joshi** – South Asian Community NKS Members
- **Lianne Dee** – Centre Manager, Christians Against Poverty
- **Darren John** – Artist and Image Maker
- **Kennedy Walker** – Lead Campaigner, Platform
- **Mark Williamson** – Director, Action for Happiness
- **Rob Shorter** – Communities & Art Lead, Doughnut Economics Action Lab
- **Katherine Trebeck** – Co-Founder, Wellbeing Economy Alliance