Sustainability *first*

Together for a Fair Climate Future

Event 3 Summary: How can we live more sustainably?

20 April 2021, 1:00 – 2:15pm



Live event illustration: William Bock – Visual Scribe

How can we live more sustainably? This event explored the social and environment impacts of our actions as individuals and communities. It shared practical tips and ideas for living more sustainably as individuals, from cutting our carbon emissions to raising our voices on climate issues. It also looked at how we link these with wider systems changes and the actions needed by business and government to support this change.

> *We really have to think of these as not sacrifices but opportunities to enrich and enhance our lifestyles and our communities* – Jack Barrie

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.

9 Action Points

Raise your voice, cut your footprint. As individuals, some of the actions that can have the biggest impacts are: talking about climate change and fairness, including voicing our concerns and actively holding corporations and governments to account; as well as reducing our emissions through consuming less, changing our diets, choosing low-carbon transport options, making homes and heating more energy efficient, and making sure our money (bank accounts, pensions etc.) is invested in companies taking action for sustainability.

> *You get to vote once every five years for your politician, but every time you spend something you get to vote to choose what sort of world you want to live in* – Angela Terry

Sustainable choices must be made easy and accessible for all. Many people don't have a choice where to shop due to where they live and economic reasons. It's the role of policy makers to remove barriers to access so that sustainable choices are easy for everyone. Enabling behaviour change starts by understanding people's experiences in a day-to-day context.

> *We need to speak to people to better understand their perspective and think about how we can redesign processes and systems so the eco-friendly choices feel easy and intuitive* – Alice Farrell

Policy decisions need to be taken today with a view to the long-term. Government and policymakers are subject to the same behaviour barriers and biases as individuals. In particular, they can be tempted to put action off until the last minute, especially if it is expensive and feels like a long-term, future issue. People are experiencing the impacts of climate change today and telling their stories of loss can emphasise the urgency to act. Identifying the opportunities that change can bring, can increase hope in a more positive future and galvanise Government into action.

Reframe what it means to be a responsible and sustainable business. This includes traceability, economic sustainability for communities impacted by supply chains, and defining success on social and environmental outcomes, not just profit and growth. Communities can also set up their own sustainable community-run, institutions outside of business to meet their needs e.g. communal gardens.

> *I think the most important thing that we can do is really pressure the corporations and government to make the change* – Kareena Birla

Moves toward net zero and a green economy must be fair and inclusive. Whilst moving towards green businesses and green energy, we must ensure there is security for marginalised and disadvantaged communities and that no one is left behind. We must

ensure people not only maintain good and secure jobs but everyone is also able to have healthy lifestyles and wellbeing.

> *What is the point of having a really sustainable world that only affluent people can really enjoy? … We need to ensure not just a sustainable world, but a happy world for all of us to live in.* – Kareena Birla

Communities are at the heart of change. Communities need to be involved in helping shape the net zero energy transition in their local areas, with local well-trained people to do the work and local authorities involved in planning. This includes local area energy plans and bringing back community energy strategies. To inspire communities, relate the big picture to issues that matter locally and to people's day-to-day lives.

> *What is going to make us reach our net zero target is getting the public involved. The best way to do that is through people's communities and the places where they live* – Angela Terry

Put principles of a circular economy into practice. The circular economy is about designing out waste and keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible. This will help cut emissions and regenerate natural ecosystems. We need to be imaginative in how we use and reuse materials and share them with our communities, in the process, creating deeper connections with each other. Business, policy, and finance all have a role to play.

Art and creativity can bring climate action to life. Artists are using creative practices to explore how human footprints manifest in the environment and to put ideas of the circular economy into practice - turning waste into art. Art gives us a way to connect to each other and to stories. Art is a powerful tool for inspiration and can evoke emotional reactions which prompt changes in behaviour.

> *Art is an amazing tool to tell stories ... Telling stories is the best way to appeal to people's emotions and capture their imagination* – Alice Farrell

Tackling climate change requires fundamental systems change. Current systems are successful in delivering certain goals, but sometimes at the detriment of the environment and people. Individual behaviour change won't lead to change at the scale and pace needed without also changing how the systems in which we live work. We must pursue an economic system which delivers human wellbeing within the ecological boundaries of the planet.

> *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

Panellists



Jack Barrie – Circular Economy Policy Analyst, Zero Waste Scotland
Jack is an expert on the topic of the circular economy. He holds a PhD on accelerating systemic innovation to accelerate the circular economy transition and a Masters in Sustainable Development from Cambridge University. He has worked on a range of radical sustainable technologies across Europe, Africa and Asia. In his role as Circular Economy Policy Analyst for Zero Waste Scotland, he develops the research, evidence, analysis and advice to Zero Waste Scotland and the Scottish Government to help realise circular economy policy commitments. In May, Jack will begin his new role as Circular Economy Research Fellow at Chatham House.



Kareena Birla – Social and Climate Activist
Kareena is an 18-year-old student studying Politics and International Relations at Keele University. Her activism is rooted in freeing people and the planet from corporate and governmental oppression. She focusses largely on how the patriarchy effects all walks of life, how ingrained racism is within the system and how we can tackle this.



Alice Farrell – Policy Advisor, Behavioural Insights Team
Alice is a Policy Advisor at the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT). BIT is a global social purpose company which generates and applies behavioural insights to inform policy, improve public services and deliver results for citizens and society. Alice specialises in Environment & Sustainability Policy. In her work, she develops interventions to encourage pro-environmental behaviours such as recycling, sustainable transport, and food consumption. Alice has a bachelors degree in Biological Sciences from Oxford University.



Angela Terry – Founder, One Home
Angela Terry is an environmental scientist who founded One Home, the UK's first one-stop-shop on climate action for consumers. One Home has reached over 260 million people since launching in April 2018 and is number one on Google for search terms such as home insulation. Angela has twenty years' experience in developing and financing renewable energy projects, Government energy policy, energy efficiency and sustainable forestry. She regularly contributes to national TV, radio and print on the impacts and the solutions to climate change including the ground-breaking IPCC report on 1.5C of warming for the BBC and The Sun's Green Week initiative.

Video contributors

We are also grateful for video contributions from:

- Jen Zead – Author of 'How to Fix the Planet (When you're a Teenager)'
- Maria Arceo – Sculptor and Installation Artist
- Charlotte Boggon – Young Trustee, Young People's Trust for the Environment (YPTE)
- Rachel Edwards – Tenant and Resident Strategy Group, Blaenau Gwent
- Syed Ahmed – Director, Energy for London and Chair, Community Energy London
- Sharlene Gandhi – Business and Sustainability Journalist
- Miranda Schnitger – Government Lead, Ellen MacArthur Foundation