

Making and implementing a Climate Emergency Declaration

If you are in an organisation which you want to make a Climate Emergency declaration, first discuss the idea with everyone involved, directly or indirectly, internally and externally to get them to understand why this is so important and to agree. This is an educational process in its own right.

Each step includes asking everyone to consider a series of questions and find answers that everyone can agree and accept.

Step 1: What do we need to know?

- Do we all understand the Climate Emergency?
- Do we have a sense of what the need to achieve carbon neutrality rapidly means for each of us and those around us, at home and at work, this year, next year and for decades to come?
- How will it affect our work? Will organisations survive? Will they have to adapt to different circumstances? How will they adapt? How long will this take?
- How will it affect us at home? What can we do personally? What can we afford to do?
- How will it affect us socially? At play or at leisure? In groups, in clubs, in sport, in art and culture?

Step 2: Identifying the difficulties

We must identify the various obstacles to carbon neutrality before we can go on to develop strategies to overcome these and the level of activity necessary - from changing personal behaviour to promoting local, regional, national or international legislation, governmental and corporate practice. Everyone must decide how and when to change our everyday lives.

Step 3: Be realistic

Before we decide to take (fast) action, we must accept that achieving and managing change can be slow and painful, however frustrating that may be. We should strive to minimise personal distress.

We must agree that what we do is achievable, collectively and individually. Being honest and not taking on too much can be more helpful than letting others down.

When we understand the Climate Emergency, we need to decide how we are going to genuinely achieve change, from the smallest willing adjustments to our daily lives or working together to alter the policies and legislation of each and every level of government around the world. Signing a petition, endorsing someone else's work, clicking "like" on social media or re-posting someone else's comments may be helpful but action is needed to achieve change.

Step 4: Think strategically and tactically

When we have decided to take action, we need to decide what we can do practically, how long each part of this will take and who will do it? What is our long-term strategy and what are the more immediate tactics to achieve the change we seek? The complexity of Climate Change can be daunting, so while looking at the overall picture is important, identifying particular issues and addressing them separately can be more realistic and easier.

At work, we can encourage colleagues - at every level of the organisation, however big or small - to adopt strategies and programmes to achieve carbon neutrality as quickly as possible while maintaining working conditions and protecting jobs, prosperity and health.

- At home, we need to decide what we can do personally and what can we afford to do. We can tell those around us what we are doing and what they can do too, whether we talk to them on the phone or use social media and encourage us all regularly to ask one another what we're doing, so we don't become complacent.
- Socially, in outside work organisations or among groups of friends, we can adopt programmes to help us change, draft statements about what we're doing and how, and send them to other individuals and organisations.

How can we ensure that what we do, as well as what we say, makes a difference?

Step 5: Work together and collaborate

We could work alone but greater progress will be achieved more quickly by working with others. We all can help. We all have something we can offer one another. This could be our time, our skills, our knowledge, our perspective, or our money.

We need to decide which other people we want to work with. Are they coming together in informal groups? Are they in established civic or voluntary organisations, institutions, trade unions or businesses?

How do we work together? We need to listen to everyone involved in, or affected by the damage to Planet Earth (or their representatives), hear what they have to say and then talk to them to agree what is practical. Can we do that in big groups or small? In person or online? Can we do this inclusively and maintain dignity and mutual respect?

Step 6: Assess and review

Regular reviews, acknowledging obstacles and frustrations, praising and thanking those who have done well and contributed time and effort can all help keep important momentum going.

Remember the six most basic questions - Who, What, Why, Where, When, How? These will have been answered before, but asking ourselves the same questions again, every few months, will help us keep going.

Look at what's going on elsewhere and change your approach if circumstances demand it.

Publish the answers, highlight difficulties, ask others for their thoughts in overcoming frustrations, impatience and resistance. This could be online, in newspapers or in your own reports, sent to local organisations or distributed door-to-door.

Commend those who deserve commendation but also tell others about the inevitable difficulties as that might be far more helpful to others than anything else. Say how you made progress and what you needed to do that.

Facts and figures are important, but they take time and effort to collect and collate. We need to decide what we're going to measure and how. Can we say 'we used to do this and now we do that'? Or do we need to know how many of our friends and colleagues have balanced the pros and cons of using a car or public transport? How many use carbon neutral electricity either at home or at work?

Step 7: Never stop

Keep going - because future changes to the way humanity lives could be as damaging as those of the past.