

Meeting 4

Yorkshire and Humber Just Transition Network

Minutes for meeting held online midday Wed. 10 January

The Yorkshire and Humber Just Transition Network is an open forum for green reps and other trade union activists to learn from each other (and each other's unions), develop (new) campaigns and strategies, share successes and setbacks, access (new) resources and events, and meet similar activists. Its intension is to work towards a just transition to a green society for Yorkshire and the Humber.

A sharable recording of this meeting is available online at <https://youtu.be/ymLmapkifSY>

Invitees

Andrew Johnson (andrew.johnson8@nhs.net), Andrew Miles (aj.miles@virginmedia.com), Catherine Porritt (catherine.porritt@neu.org.uk), Chris Butler (christopherbutler1@mac.com), Chris Copland (coplandattalktalk@gmail.com), Chris Page (chris@unison-rotherham.org.uk), Daphne Robins (daphne.robins@unitetheunion.org), Dave Douglas (dave.douglas@gmbactivist.org.uk), Dave Houlgate (david.houlgate@northyorks.gov.uk), David Lightfoot (david.lightfoot@leeds.gov.uk), Debby Cobbett (deborahcobbett@gmail.com), Dilys Beaumont (dilys@beaumont28.plus.com), Ellen Robottom (ellenrobottom@hotmail.com), Gerald Ramsden (gerry.ramsden@gmail.com), Gerry Lavery (unitecommunityleedswakefield@outlook.com), Gwen Vardigans (gwen.vardigans@gmail.com), Finn Jensen (finn.jensen@rocketmail.com), Ian Rashbrook (ian.rashbrook@networkrail.co.uk), Ian Sturrock (i.sturrock@tees.ac.uk), Jamie O'Dell (james.o'dell@prospect.org.uk), Jenni Crisp (crispjenni67@gmail.com), Jenny Patient (climateyjen@gmail.com), Jessica Fox (jessica.fox@hullcc.gov.uk), Jo Cutter (j.cutter@leeds.ac.uk), Joan Miller (joanmiller104@gmail.com), John Ingleson (john.ingleson@nhs.net), Julie Forgan (julieforgan@gmail.com), Kerri Tierney (kerri@unison-rotherham.org.uk), Kim Perry (kimlcperry@gmail.com), Lawrence Barfoot (lawrence.barfoot@homeoffice.gov.uk), Liam Murphy (liampatrickmurphy29@gmail.com), Lucinda Wakefield (lmbwakefield@yahoo.co.uk), Martin Hickman (patrick.hickman@homeoffice.gov.uk), Martin Mayer (martin.mayer@unitetheunion.org), Nigel Parry (nigel.parry@unitetheunion.org), Pauline Bailey (pbailey29@gmail.com), Simon Bowens (simon.bowens@foe.co.uk), Simon Brett (simon_brett2003@yahoo.co.uk), Stephanie Hay (stephanie.hay@suma.coop), Steve Hansom (stevehbusiness@icloud.com), Teresa Moore (tmm914@icloud.com), Tom Kistell (t.kistell@shu.ac.uk), Tracy Pallett (tracy.pallett@hullcc.gov.uk), Zach Adams (zach.adams@nhs.net), Zoey Longley (Zoey.longley@leeds.gov.uk) **(45)**

Attendees

Sam Perry, Dave Douglas, Catherine Porritt, Rosie Huzzard, Chris Copland, Debby Cobbett, Ellen Rowbottom, Jo Cutter, Simon Bowens, Dave Merrett, Zach Adams **(11)**

Apologies

Dilys Beaumont, Tom Kistell, Ian Rashbrook, Jamie O'Dell, Jessica Fox, Daphne Robins **(6)**

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Welcome

Sam welcomed all attendees, introduced the network for those new to the group, and reminded all that we'd be recording the meeting and posting it online for those unable to attend. All consented to this. All attendees were then invited to introduce themselves

Minutes from previous meeting

Group confirm previous minutes were an accurate record

Matters arising from previous meeting (15 mins)

Sam invited matters arising, and reflection on past events, meetings, action, etc.

- Jo fed back from her action at the last meeting: She now has details of a union degrowth course being run in Germany but can't access it because it's in German: **She will arrange for the key elements to be translated and then distribute**
- Sam led discussion of the General Motion for Climate Action circulated last time
 - Ellen (Unite) has passed the motion at her branch
 - Caroline (NEU and Wakefield Trades Council) has passed it at both her NEU branch at the Trades Council
 - Jo (UCU) is looking to put this through her union too
- Sam led discussion on draft retrofit policy paper circulated last time:
 - Jo asked about the intended audience and advised that it focus more on the positives and cobenefits of domestic retrofit, and well as on good quality work and dialogue with unions than at present. Sam responded that it is primarily for Labour in developing the specifics of their manifesto and that this was helpful feedback which would go towards the next draft
 - Ellen advised that the work of Tom Wooley (who has stressed the poor quality and oversight of previous retrofit work) be incorporated into the piece o emphasis the importance of high-quality training
 - Debby raised the point that perpetuation of nuclear family living arrangements was not necessarily a long term or the most efficient solution to social issues

Announcements (10 mins)

- Saturday 13 January midday-4pm: South Yorkshire Climate Alliance is hosting a **Speed Dating Event** for activists at Cemetery Road Baptist Church, Napier Street, Sheffield. Book [online](#)
- Sunday 28 January 10am-5pm: **We Make Tomorrow** is holding a one-day conference at the NEU headquartered in London. Book [online](#). Ellen also asked for anyone interested in contributing as a speaker to contact her
- NEU is putting on new **green rep training** for members 26-28 April. Book [online](#)
- Simon invited anyone who wants to **collaborate with Friends of the Earth** with campaigning/lobbying/climate hustings re the Yorkshire mayoral elections to [contact him](#). [York Cycle Campaign](#) and the [York Civic Trust](#) are also involved already

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- Friends of the Earth is hosting all Yorkshire members in June. [Contact Debby](#) for details
- [Just Transition Wakefield](#) is holding its AGM on 31 January. Contact [Catherine](#) for details
- There's a new edition of the [Greener Jobs Alliance Newsletter](#)—essential reading towards a just transition

Topic presentation and discussion (30 mins)

Sam gave a brief presentation on 'Climate and Jobs Actions Plans' and green rep rights (10 mins):

- He reminded everyone of the goals, aims, and approach of the Lucas Plan and introduced 'Climate and Jobs Actions Plans' as climate-aware/decarbonising/pro-environment versions of the same focussed on co-development of a sustainable organisational strategy, guaranteeing long term sustainable work, positive/socially just decarbonisation, and ensuring self-sustaining momentum
- He spoke of two approaches to start the work: A spark campaign where a single win is translated into sustained action (e.g., UNISON's campaign to create Llandough hospital's 'Health Meadow', and UCU's campaign to get Cardiff University to declare a climate emergency) and development of a framework for change where the union fixes a permanent place in organisational decision-making (e.g., BFAWU's Health, Safety, and Environment reps at Greggs, and Bristol Unions United cross-union committee)
- He suggested that key to long-term victory would be recognition of union green rep rights, whether via multi-hatting or recognition for green reps in and of themselves

There followed a discussion, during which Sam invited members to contribute specifically on how unions could implement Climate and Jobs Action Plans, during which the following contributions were made:

- Debby spoke of the potential opportunities of trade unions using green accreditation and league tables to encourage organisations (especially educational institutions) to take climate action
- Catherine stressed the importance of continuous dialogue led by the unions: Her NEU branch takes a climate action to every JCC meeting to keep this on the agenda
- Catherine also lamented that officers in WYCA have shown themselves to have a poor understanding of the significance of unions in their work, and stressed that only continuous pressure from unions on their own members and officers as well as on all public and other organisations will ensure that our movement is seen as relevant and listened to
- Rosie reflected on her new NEU green rep course: She said that the focus was very much on bargaining, inspired especially by UCU's approach. She stressed the issues of NEU bargaining in essentially small workplaces (although there is some interest in multi-school campaigns), but nonetheless her course pushes 'spark campaigns' especially around curriculum changes, and talks about larger issues (like school retrofit) as next steps once a bargaining framework was better established. She said that, within NEU, members often feel that they do share common interests with leaders—until disputes

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occur, so the fertility of green bargaining hasn't been tested very thoroughly. She reported some great success stories too.

- Simon shared [a report](#) FOE wrote on green job opportunities for young people
- Simon also stressed that workplace planning was essential, as shown by the Scunthorpe steel collapse recently, and Sam spoke of the importance of getting these workers plans in place before a crisis began
- Ellen elaborated further on the debate around steel production and stressed that campaigns and research would be more successful if done at a wider-than-a-workshop level, bringing in communities and thinking about systemic changes rather than the viability of a particular plant in an otherwise untouched socio-economic environment
- Sam reflected on Ellen's point and argued for willingness to compromise in campaigns, using Drax power station as an example, where solutions will need to acknowledge both sides of the debate

Union action discussion (30 mins)

Sam led discussion on how the Network (with allies) could develop/support the development of Climate and Jobs Actions Plans in the region, seeking commitments from participants which we can report back on next time (*30 mins*), during which the following contributions were made:

- Rosie spoke of the issues of unintended consequences from green actions, and also of the political importance of specific workers' voices and specific solutions: Part of the role of trade unions and green rep training, she suggested, is to teach individual unionists that their voices and opinions are louder, as public-facing workers, than they perhaps already appreciate, and that there may be space for (perhaps the TUC to explore) training members and officers about how to have sensitive (i.e. non-violent) conversations outside of membership on matters that are important to whole communities
- Dave mentioned the Redcar hydrogen trial and his disappointment that more from Labour and the labour movement didn't support this potential solution for fear that it would cause too big a change or wasn't a complete solution. He lamented that the focus being on decarbonisation narrowly has resulted in labour representatives opposing the creation of good jobs and property exploring solutions. He suggests that the concept of 'change' would be benefit from being supported from within the movement, rather than associated overtly with threats.
- He also stressed that there is a significant amount of greenwashing going on in the private energy companies which praise their green installations while continuing fully with their fossil-fuel installations. He argued that, except by bringing these companies into public ownership and/or by politicising campaigns, there was little prospect of improvements here. Sam responded that it's important that our movement try to politicise things as much as possible and encouraged individuals and unions to take more active stances on such issues as this, like the TUC do

AOB (2 mins)

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- Catherine proposed that the Network put forward a specific thank-you to Martin Meyer for his work within the Network and for the movement more widely. **Sam will send this shortly**

Members of the YHJTN (listed below as invitees) consent to their contact details, attendance, and contributions being shared with the TUC and with other members of the Network. This consent extends to video content as shared by the TUC and made publicly available. For the purposes of data protection legislation, the TUC is the data controller and members' data are held according to the TUC [Privacy Policy](#). Should any particular member wish to withdraw their consent, please contact Sam Perry in the first instance.