

Meeting 6

Yorkshire and Humber Just Transition Network

Minutes for meeting held online 10am Tuesday 25 June 2024

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/PnlM2zYFqq0>

Invitees

Andrea Smith (andrea.smith@edfenergy.com), Andrew Johnson (andrew.johnson8@nhs.net), Andrew Miles (a.j.miles@virginmedia.com), Catherine Porritt (catherine.porritt@neu.org.uk), Chris Butler (christopherbutler1@mac.com), Chris Copland (coplandattalktalk@gmail.com), Dan Wynn-Mackenzie (dan.wynn-mackenzie@rotherham.gov.uk), Daphne Robins (daphne.robins@unitetheunion.org), Dave Berry (daveberrygmb@yahoo.co.uk); Dave Douglas (dave.douglas@gmbactivist.org.uk), Dave Houlgate (david.houlgate@northyorks.gov.uk), David Lightfoot (david.lightfoot@leeds.gov.uk), David Merrett (dave.merrett1@hotmail.co.uk); Debby Cobbett (deborahcobbett@gmail.com), Dilys Beaumont (dilys@beaumont28.plus.com), Ellen Robottom (ellenrobottom@hotmail.com), Finn Jensen (finn.jensen@rocketmail.com), Gerry Ramsden (gerry.ramsden@gmail.com), Gerry Lavery (unitecommunityleedswakefield@outlook.com), Gwen Vardigans (gwen.vardigans@gmail.com), Ian Rashbrook (ian.rashbrook@networkrail.co.uk), Ian Southby (ianalexander.southby@cntw.nhs.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), Lucy Balogh (lucybalogh@yahoo.com), Luke Neal (laneal1@sheffield.ac.uk), Mark Hudson (mark.hudson@unitetheunion.org); Martin Hickman (patrick.hickman@homeoffice.gov.uk), Natalie Ratcliffe (n.ratcliffe@unison.co.uk), Nigel Parry (nigel.parry@unitetheunion.org), Pauline Bailey (pbailey29@gmail.com), Pauline Lawson (pauline.lawson@edfenergy.com), Rakesh Prashara (rak.prashara@outlook.com), Rosaleen McKenna (Rosaleen.McKenna@gmbactivist.org.uk), Rosie Huzzard (rosie.huzzard@neu.org.uk); 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), Tracy Pallett (tracy.pallett@hullcc.gov.uk), Zach Adams (zach.adams@nhs.net), Zoey Longley (Zoey.longley@leeds.gov.uk) (55)

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Attendees

Sam Perry, Miranda Duncombe, Lucy Balogh, Dave Merrett, Andrea Smith, Ian Southby, John Ingleson, Pauline Lawson, Jo Cutter, Jenny Patient, Ellen Robottom, Rakesh Prashara, Dave Douglas, Catherine Porritt (14)

Apologies

Gwen Vardigans, Ian Rashbrook, Mark Hudson, Martin Hickman, Tracy Wainwright, Graham Petersen (6)

Welcome

Sam welcomed members and reminded them about recording and data protection

Sam recommended that, in light of the election next week, some space be held later to reflect on the party's commitments and ambitions. The group agreed and an additional item was added to the agenda

All attendees were invited to briefly introduce themselves. The *new* members in the meeting included:

- Dave Merrett from York Labour Party, York Trades Council, York Climate Commission, and City of York Council (councillor)
- Lucy Balogh is the Gateshead Public Services UNISON Environment Officer, working on divestment of pensions and low-carbon energy using old coal fields
- Andrea Smith and Pauline Lawson are joint health and safety officers at EDF Northern UNISON branch. They've been asked to help their employer from within their union on green action
- Ian Southby is a green rep from a Newcastle Community Mental Health Trust
- Rakesh Prashara is an environment rep but unfortunately members in the meeting struggled to hear him speak so he said he'd just listen in for now

Minutes from previous meeting

Members confirmed that the circulated minutes accurately represent the last meeting

Matters arising from previous meeting

Members were invited to discuss any matters arising from the previous minutes, and to reflect on past events, meetings, actions:

- Sam noted that the event at Yorkshire Sustainability Festival went ahead and was well received. The speakers were himself, Tony Gosling (a Community organiser at British Steel), Jo Cutter (lecturer at Leeds University, a Unite rep, and invitee to this forum), and Helen Grayshan (partnerships lead at Wakefield Council and a friend of the movement)
- Sam invited anyone who had attended any of the events we advertised last time to report back to the group on anything of note:
 - He praised another successful [With Banners Held High](#) with some excellent speakers and good conversations at the stalls

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- Jenny highlighted the useful [Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group](#) conference in London previously advertised. She participated in a breakout on a National Climate Service, which was also praised
- Jenny also raised a [War on Want](#) event which was ‘inspiring’. She recommended others keep up to date with War on Want’s events
- Ellen made the point that workplace organising is good but there’s a challenge bringing national issues and efforts into local and regional contexts, which was received with approval. She also made the point that climate change organising is relevant in all sectors

Recommendation on a change to our scope

Sam welcomed the new members to this group from the TUC’s Northern region and recommended that this group expands to become the North East, Yorkshire, and Humber Just Transition Network, recognising the TUC region’s new shape

The group agreed to this

Topic presentation and discussion 1

Graham Petersen was asked to present on air quality and pollution as climate change and occupational health and safety issues but was unfortunately unable to attend

Instead, Sam drew the group’s attention to the [Trade Union Clean Air Network](#) (TUCAN) and specifically to their new guidance document, [Workers Guide to Action on Indoor Workplace Air Pollution](#), and to their new film, [Indoor Air Pollution: All in a Day’s Work](#)

Their new work is trying to refocus the attention of government, communities, and campaign bodies not just on public health but also on occupational health, and not just on outdoor air pollution but on indoor air pollution as well

- They highlight that there is no legal guidance on indoor air pollution, meaning that air pollution indoors (in workplaces and also in homes) is actually often at dangerous levels, but also that there is very little monitoring of it, so the extent of the problem is not known, and action to reduce it is thus incredibly rare
- TUCAN has stressed the special issue of indoor commercial cooking settings and the significant risk to health associated with poor ventilation or particulate matter removal in these settings
- The TUC, BFAWU, and others have joined the campaign to fight for better standards and monitoring, and are encouraging health and safety reps to take action in their own workplaces to highlight and mitigate the issues
- The campaign also highlights the climate change impacts of the issue: Fossil fuels and fossil fuel-reliant processes are significant pollutants, but also warmer conditions make the dispersal of and natural absorption of pollution much less likely, exacerbating the negative effects of poor air quality

Topic presentation and discussion 2

Miranda Duncombe presented on the Heat Strike campaign and how members can get involved or support it locally

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- Miranda's organisation is the Rapid Response Unit, which emerged out of Extinction Rebellion and was created to prepare responses to predictable high-profile climate events, like heat waves. These events bring climate change to the public's attention very forcefully but campaigners and trade unions are often not prepared to use that publicity, hence the idea of the Heat Strike campaign
- Heat Strike is designed as a campaign which trade unions and climate campaigners can participate in together
- The idea is that, when temperatures reach 36°C, the campaign will call a 'heat strike', publicly announcing that it's too hot to work and that this is the government's fault for not acting earlier. Actions will include banner drops, community cool hubs, lunchtime walk outs, go slows, and similar
- Following the hottest day, there will be a mass mobilisation once temperatures are cooler
- The campaign's key demands are that the government takes more serious action on climate change, that there's a maximum working temperature established, and that there's a furlough scheme in place for periods during which workers are not able to work due to the heat
- The ask is for certain workplaces to commit to taking action and to get in contact with Miranda to discuss this further and get access to resources. She can be contacted at xrukprogramming@gmail.com
- The group widely supported the initiative, especially its potential for all workplaces and the link it makes between workplace action and a global crisis
- Miranda reflected that there may be alternative scenarios where workplaces take action for *unseasonably* warm weather, i.e. temperatures that don't meet the threshold but are out of season, or similar
- Sam also highlighted the [Joint Union Heatwave Protocol](#) which speaks to these issues and practice actions that unions and employers can take on or to prepare for hot days. This resource will be invaluable for members looking to act on this campaign

Reflections on the general election

Members were invited to offer reflections on the general election and party commitments:

- It was noted that economic growth was a significant aim of Labour's manifesto, and that this may not be desirable if we are seeking transition to a greener economy and cutting carbon emissions, due to the close relationship between economic activity and carbon emissions
- There was a discussion about what close consultation in the Labour manifesto meant for us: Sam fed back that, from his contacts, it seemed that Labour were keen to involve unions in more decision making (like things were under New Labour) and that there would probably be a sustainable industrial strategy committee of some form, which allowed space for government and the unions to discuss policy priorities. He reflected that he felt that Labour was serious about helping transition certain sectors, especially

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energy production and steel. However, he felt that Labour wasn't talking the language of government assistance with the wider transition (of service sectors, etc.)

- Lucy asked whether anyone knew of pension plans under Labour. Sam reflected that several Labour politicians have supported the decarbonisation of pensions, but didn't know whether that was national policy
- Pauline stressed the need for schools to be promoting green jobs and climate education. There was agreement that this was necessary, and support for the role of trade unions in education was key
- There was also a brief discussion about the Greener Jobs Taskforce recommendations, which included curricula changes: Sam reflected that the follow-up actions from this were of limited positive scope and unions were very minimally involved in them, but that Labour may be revisiting this, as he understands it, once in government
- Pauline made the very clear point that we may benefit from rebranding 'green jobs' as 'jobs for the future', for which there was agreement

Announcements and news

Members were invited to update the group with news from their own work and advertise forthcoming events, meetings, actions:

- Sam made members aware that there was a new [Greener Jobs Alliance newsletter](#) out and several new blogs, including a [new addition](#) to the GJA myth-buster series. He also extended an invitation to members to contribute to this publication. Tracy, in this network, has already agreed to contribute to the myth-buster series on flood risk
- UCU has a new 'Bargaining for a Green New Deal' [course](#)
- NEU (especially) has made climate action a key element of [its asks](#) ahead of the general election
- The TUC is holding a webinar on the [Health and Safety of Climate Change](#) 2pm Wednesday 3 July
- Also on 3 July, 6.30-7.45pm, Medact is hosting an event online called [From Fuel Poverty to the Just Transition](#)
- The [Net Zero Week](#) online conference is happening 8-10 July
- The inaugural [Sheffield Transformed Festival](#) is to be held the weekend of 19-21 July
- West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges is offering a **fully funded course** for 'leaders and managers' on [embedding sustainability into businesses](#). It's free for those who live in West Yorkshire and work in a leadership or management role. It's running over three days in late June and over five Fridays in June-July
- [Durham Miners Gala](#) will be Saturday 13 July this year. This broad event has a key transition element, especially on the 40th anniversary of the miners' strike
- The TUC is looking for [sign-ups](#) to its Leveraging Green programme. This is a series of workshops over the next year to discuss how climate change can be an organising tool as well as a topic for action for unions. The programme is aimed at organisers and

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senior reps, regardless of their experience organising around or even thinking about climate change as a trade union issue

- Sam has learnt that community groups can get [free trees from the Woodland Trust](#). Individual unions or a coalition of branches may be able to explore the options for getting access to trees or hedgerows to plant on a site granted to us or on union sites. If anyone is interested in pursuing this, please contact Sam

AOB

Members were invited to raise any other business

- No items were raised

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.