

WINTER ISSUE

THE GREEN GAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL STUDENT NEWSLETTER OF THE UK SCHOOLS SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK

THE REAL REPRESENTATIVES

UKSSN STUDENTS REPRESENT
THE FUTURE AT COP26

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

WHAT IS CLIMATE ANXIETY? • A DAY IN THE BLUE ZONE, A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE •
WHAT IS COP26? • LIFE IN THE GREEN ZONE • OUR TIME AT COP26 • IN
CONVERSATION WITH GEORGE MONBIOT

UKSSN STUDENTS REPRESENT HOPE FOR OUR FUTURE AT COP26

BY JACK, EDITOR, SOMERSET NETWORK

COP26 - a turning point in history, but not necessarily in the way we had hoped.

Many will agree that COP26 failed politically. While it delivered successful action in some areas, the world had hoped that we would finally see some strong action from world leaders. To quote Greta Thunberg, the only thing we really saw was "blah,

blah, blah". By that I mean that we saw empty promises once again, instead of hope.

Instead, what we saw was the power of young people. Teenagers from across the country represented the future in Glasgow. The members of UKSSN worked tirelessly in the run up and while in Glasgow to ensure that young people truly had a voice at the

international climate change conference. We worked alongside organisations such as PPL PWR, UCell and Climate Psychology Alliance with support from Global Action Plan and the Royal Society of Chemistry.

I hope that this newsletter is able to showcase the amazing work of UKSSN at COP26 and inspire you to join us in our work for a better planet.

WHAT IS CLIMATE ANXIETY?

BY CAMERON, SCOTLAND NETWORK

Climate anxiety is a feeling of concern over the effect of the climate crisis and you may have experienced it yourself, without even thinking about it, when you watched a video or watched an article about climate change that left you worried, anxious or depressed. This experience is felt all over the world by many people - particularly young people. Despite the fact that so many people from many different countries who will all face different effects of climate change experience this, it is not discussed nearly enough. This lack of communication over the stress of the climate crisis can have a deeply isolating effect on people who experience climate anxiety.

According to Caroline Hickman, an expert in the field of the effects that climate change has on people's mental health, climate anxiety is not a mental illness - in fact it is a mental strength that suggests compassion and awareness. This is because, despite having similar effects as a mental illness, it is built on natural survival instincts. However, because of the effects that climate anxiety has that can resemble mental illness, it must be addressed and communicated in order for people to achieve the ability to deal with this and help in the fight against climate change. Pretending that the climate crisis is not there will never solve the issue of the climate crisis and neither will pretending that we cannot fix the issue.

Symptoms of climate anxiety include guilt, anger, blame and hopelessness and fantasizing ideas of both unrealistic rescue and of dystopia. You may also experience hope

and feel inspired to take action as many people with climate anxiety do. From surveys done on an international and national level, an average of eighty percent of people experience eco-anxiety. Meanwhile, 45% feel these feelings have an impact on their daily lives. This decreases a lot in the UK to 28% of young people, but it is still an important figure. 52% of young people worldwide think their safety is at risk, meanwhile 39% of young people from the UK think that. 73% of the young people in the UK are frightened of the idea of the future. All of these statistics are horrifying, but they are needed. All of these feelings and thoughts must be felt in order to achieve a successful future. The sad fact is that 48% of young people both worldwide and in the UK feel like they are being ignored and dismissed on these issues. 65% believed that the government is failing young people and 64% believe that the government is lying about their inaction.

These stats will likely feel horrific, especially if this is the first time that you've heard of climate anxiety. When I discussed it with other young people who watched the video with me, there was a mutual consensus between all of us that it also brought relief. We all felt the same thing. We knew how the people who had answered the survey questions felt.

Prior to COP26, we learnt more about climate anxiety, with the help of the Climate Psychology Alliance and PPL PWR, and held climate cafes in order to fully understand what it is and how to deal with it. During COP26, the Glasgow team tried to help people express their climate anxiety through offering people the chance to write letters to their local MPs with a stall on the Saturday. It was



really impactful watching and reading the letters that people wrote.

So how do we deal with climate anxiety? Of course, it is likely that the effects of climate anxiety will never fully be dealt with unless we deal with the climate crisis. But there are ways to make it more manageable. You can try regular techniques to support your mental health, such as therapy or meditation. This breaks down the belief that no one else cares. You cannot solve this issue on your own.

SEE OUR MP POSTCARDS ON TWITTER & INSTAGRAM



SUPPORT FOR CLIMATE ANXIETY

Resources for Young People
climatepsychologyalliance.org

Individual Therapeutic Support
climatepsychologyalliance.org

Free 24/7 Mental Health Text Support - Shout 85258
giveusashout.org

Mobilising Mindsets For Climate Action
forceofnature.xyz

Turning Anxiety Into Action (For Teachers)
transfrom-our-world.org

A DAY IN THE BLUE ZONE, A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

BY NOR, OXFORD NETWORK



I and two other UK Schools Sustainability Network (UKSSN) students (Danyaal from Yorkshire and Toma from London) after an early start and an hour spent getting through security and registration headed into the Blue Zone where negotiations were taking place and different countries were running panels, talks and discussions. We had no idea how awesome the day would be.

It was youth empowerment day so it's no surprise that the first event we went to was a talk about youth empowerment run by WWF. Arriving late we only caught the end, but it was a nice start to the day setting it up as day of learning, empowerment, and promise.

Having some time to kill we then wondered around the Blue Zone shown around by one of our amazing chaperones Ana Romero (a UKSSN teacher and negotiator for the Mexican delegation). In the action zone people were being interviewed by companies like Sky News and people were sat about talking and attending open talks. In a zone full of security negotiations behind closed doors people were sat about typing at their computers or writing things down in their notebooks.

In another each party had set up a pavilion. Qatar were there with models of the buildings they had built for their net zero world cup. We spoke to some people from Colombia about their tree planting initiatives and were given a card game about venomous snakes. The UK Presidency Pavilion was not hard to find being red and blue. We saw the pavilions of the Kingdom of Morocco, the Turkish, the Saudi Arabians, the Egyptians, the

Koreans, the Indigenous peoples, the Russian Federation as well as the Water pavilion, the Science pavilion, the Nordic Pavilion and so many more.

We then had lunch with an official from the Department of International development, one of Jess's old friends (Jess was our other amazing Chaperone) who told us about how the negotiations worked and how much sleep people like the security guards weren't getting.

The afternoon was as action packed. It started with a panel discussion called The Nature of Our Future: The Role of Young People in Climate Solutions with Nature, a panel which Toma was a member of. Other panellists included youth representatives from Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, Youth 4 nature and Scouts. The keynote speaker was none other than Bear Grills whose speech was very long and inspiring. It was a very empowering panel, and all the panellists had lots of amazing things to say and came from some fantastic organisations.

After that panel Danyaal had the highlight of his day when we got to meet the Secretary of state for Education Nadhim Zahawi and with very little warning were suddenly on a panel next to him, Professor Ed Hawkins (from university of Reading, part of ICCP, best known for the heat stripes) and Claire Mathison (from the National History Museum). We got to hear all about the Department for Education new Climate leaders' award and Nature Park scheme as well as give our own thoughts and ask questions about them. Zahawi was very friendly, and his initiatives are a great start to the government providing us with more green education.

We were then invited to attend a massive summit in a big conference

room. It was the first-time environmental ministers and educational ministers had sat together on a panel marking a significant shift towards green education and it was so amazing that we got to attend. We heard from environmental and educational ministers from all over the world promising to implement green education in various different ways, as well as some inspiring youth representatives that had been involved with things like the Mock COP. Some of the ministers sounded sincere and enthusiastic like the ministers from Malawi and Scotland while other minister's plans sounded unrealistic and non-committal.

The entire experience was eye-opening and overall, incredibly positive. We got to meet so many cool people like Oluwaseyi Moejoh, a young National geographic explorer and co-founder of the u-recycle initiative, Nadhim Zahawi, Ed Hawkins, and the National Park people. I hope that the rest of COP26 goes as positively as our day in the blue zone did for us.





COP26:

WHAT IS IT AND WHY SHOULD WE CARE?



In November 2021, the UK will be hosting the 26th annual session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, or "COP26", in Glasgow. Italy has partnered with the UK to host Pre-COP and The Youth Summit.

WHAT IS A COP?

COP refers to the decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

At the summit, delegates including heads of state, climate experts and negotiators will come together to agree coordinated action to tackle climate change.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Kyoto Protocol
- The Cancun Agreement
- The Green Climate Fund
- The Paris Agreement



How Often?

The COP meets every year, unless the Parties decide otherwise. The first COP meeting was held in Berlin, Germany in March, 1995.

The COP Presidency rotates among the five recognised UN regions – that is, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe and Others – there is also a tendency for the venue of the COP to also shift among these groups.



WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Government minister and MP Alok Sharma has been appointed full-time President for COP 26.

Sharma's role was originally temporary until he left his position as Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in January 2021.



CRITICISMS

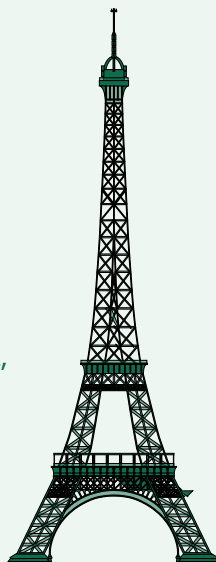
- Requires leaders to travel which negatively impacts the environment
- Has only produced one legally binding agreement – The Paris Agreement



THE PARIS AGREEMENT

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016.

Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.



SOURCES

ukcop26.org

bulb.co.uk/blog/cop26-what-it-is-and-why-it-matters

<https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

<https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/supreme-bodies/conference-of-the-parties-cop>

IMPORTANCE



1) An opportunity to build greener, more sustainable economies after the devastating effects of coronavirus. The pandemic has shown us that a global problem needs global collaboration

2) It will be the first time nations come together to discuss the commitments they made in the Paris Agreement



UKSSN



OUR TIME AT COP26





A DAY IN THE GREEN ZONE

BY CAMERON, SCOTLAND NETWORK

COP26 is more than just an opportunity for governments and powerful businesses to come together and make climate deals. It's an opportunity for the people and for activism. It's an opportunity to come together and share how climate change is affecting us and those around us, how we want to change and how we can change. I had the pleasure of going to the 'Green Zone' (a space for civil society groups to run events, stands and meet with members of the general public and official COP26 delegate) at COP26 with the UK Schools Sustainability Network and it was a fantastic experience.

At COP26, the Green Zone was held at Glasgow Science Centre, just off the River Clyde. We arrived on Friday. Every member of our group had only met briefly. When I arrived at the Science Centre, I was enamoured. I had been to the Science Centre earlier in my life on school trips, but the redecoration project was amazing. Art made by climate activists had been painted onto the walls, there were dozens of pop-up stands and the building was filled with life and conversation.

I met with Will and Elena from the Midlands, Matty from Avon and Rishi from Surrey. Together we met with people who discussed how they hope to use hydro-power to create electricity on a mass scale, before we saw one of the amazing UKSSN staff mentors, David. David and one of the other fantastic mentors, Tom, were on the phone when we met with them. I didn't realise the opportunity I was being given. David told me that we had the opportunity to be interviewed on STV (Scottish ITV), as they wanted to speak with young

people. Will, David, Matty and I all walked down to meet with Tom, only to find that they only wanted Scottish pupils. As the only Scottish member of the UKSSN's Glasgow trip at that time, it was my job. I pulled a shirt and blazer over my T-shirt and focused on the woman interviewing me. When I finished, I was told that I should look out for it at six o'clock. After several nights of checking for my interview on TV I realised that I wouldn't be on (we all learned at COP26 the hard way about interviews being postponed, curtailed, cancelled or not aired). But at the time, I was thrilled. We did another interview, this time focusing on a die-in outside Bank of America, led by doctors. This interview was done by ourselves. Tom and Matty posed the questions to us and recorded them, to submit to the news organisation, whilst Will and I answered.

We then went outside. The outside area was dedicated mainly to Green Transportation and how we could recreate cars and buses to not only be carbon neutral, but also be safer, as the self-driving cars would use bluetooth to ensure it didn't crash. During lunch, we met up with most of our group. I was disappointed by the plastic containers at the food and was sceptical about how they disposed of it, as we either placed it in a bin on campus, or a member of the COP26 staff would take it from us. However, the food was good and they offered great options if you were vegan or vegetarian.

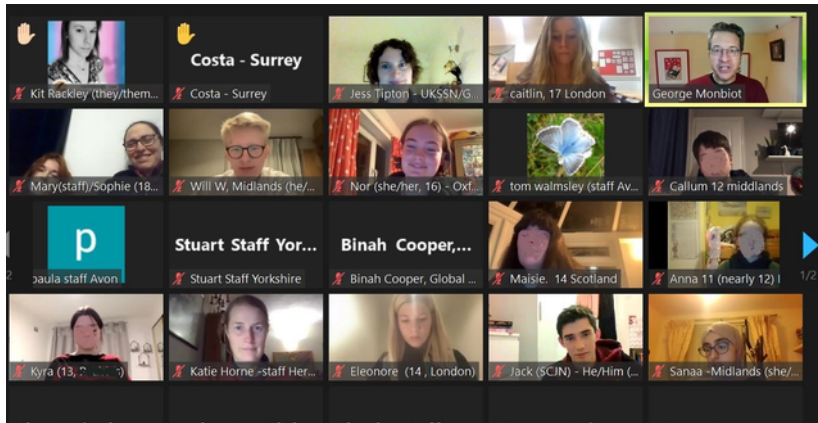
After lunch, a group hung back to meet with Lauren, one of the PPL PWR team, our partners for our Green Zone stand the next day (read more about our Pupil Power Roadshow [here](#)), who led us in a brief guided meditation and discussion. We then separated off. Sophie from Avon was due to attend a conference with me and a few others, but that didn't start

until a while later. But when Jack from Somerset, Grace from London and Abi from Yorkshire turned up, we were good to go and went to the conference. The conference focused on policy making and as it was youth empowerment day, the people running the sessions tried to appeal to young people by telling them to use their vote and to go into politics, to get the job done themselves. Afterwards, we went with Paula (another fabulous UKSSN staff mentor) down to the foyer, to meet the young winners of a photography competition, who had come up from England. They were both much younger than us, primary school students. We then decided to make the most of being in the Green Zone. We took a picture at the entrance, where there was a world map covered made out of moss. I don't know how it happened, but we somehow ended up in a conversation with another group like us - Send Our Friend To School. We all exchanged social media accounts and this brief encounter means that we're still in contact. We then returned to visiting stalls. We made pledges to reduce our use of hot water and we learnt more about how you can reduce your carbon footprint with your diet.

I can't wait to return tomorrow to help run our Green Zone Pupil Power Roadshow exhibition exploring climate anxiety, valuing green spaces and energy storage solutions with PPL PWR in our bespoke UKSSN-Planetary youth artwork t-shirts! You can also check out our digital [Pupil Power Roadshow - Google Arts & Culture](#).

Overall, the Green Zone was an amazing experience that I will never forget. There are too many people to thank who managed to ensure all of this happened, so if you were involved, thank you so much

LIFE AFTER COP26



IN CONVERSATION WITH GEORGE MONBIOT

BY WILL, MIDLANDS NETWORK

We rounded off the year with an exciting Zoom with the one and only George Monbiot, thanks to the Avon and Somerset networks bumping into him at Glasgow Central station on their arrival at COP26!

We sent him this letter to thank him:

Hi George

We just wanted to say how grateful we are to you for giving up your time to come and talk to us. We found your answers incredibly insightful, and it was really interesting to hear your views about COP and the climate emergency more generally, especially with regard to helping the Global South and working within the constraints of our current system to create change. Your work has for so long been a beacon of hope in a world of indifference, and it was extremely exciting to hear from you directly.

Thank you

UKSSN students

ABOUT UKSSN

There are now UK regional networks established in Avon, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, London, Mersey Region, Midlands, Oxford, Surrey and Somerset, with further networks set to launch soon. A similar network has also set up in Ireland. The networks provide students and staff with a way to connect with peers, share ideas and resources, collaborate on local, national and international initiatives, and develop personal, social and workplace skills.

In spring 2021 the UK Schools Sustainability Network (UKSSN) was formed as an umbrella to bring all these regional networks together. UKSSN meets a few times per term on Zoom to bring student and staff reps together from all the regional networks. They also meet for specific projects and activities.

Most schools in the networks are secondary but students and staff often work on environmental projects with local primaries.

International twinning is also being set up with schools in Kenya, South Africa, Malawi, Russia, Bulgaria, Nepal and Korea.

Each regional network has a staff branch to act as a support network for educators from various disciplines and school roles to share resources and ideas. There is a UKSSN staff networking group (with offshoots by subject, and for primary and secondary staff) that interacts online and occasionally meets in person for away days around the UK.

The regional networks are run at grassroots level - often centred around a hub school - and the whole network is now hosted and supported by Global Action Plan to enable wider reach.

To find out more, visit our website.

FOLLOW US!



[TRANSFORM-OUR-WORLD.ORG/UKSSN](https://transform-our-world.org/ukssn)



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UKSSN YOUTUBE PLAYLIST

“

**WHAT YOU DO MAKES A
DIFFERENCE, AND YOU HAVE TO
DECIDE WHAT KIND OF
DIFFERENCE YOU WANT TO
MAKE**

DR JANE GOODALL

**UKSSN: BRINGING TOGETHER
NETWORKS OF STUDENTS TO
CONNECT AND COLLABORATE
ON ISSUES THEY CARE ABOUT,
FULLY SUPPORTED BY SCHOOL
STAFF.**