

ASK THE CLIMATE QUESTION

Holyrood elections 2016

INTRODUCTION

Since the last Holyrood elections in 2011, the science of climate change has grown stronger and the impacts more evident both at home and abroad.

We now have a clearer picture of the toll that rising global temperatures are having on the places and people we care about, affecting many of the world's most vulnerable communities and threatening habitats and nature on every continent and in every ocean.

With your help and pressure, Scotland secured a world-leading Climate Change Act that committed us to doing our fair share through ambitious emissions reductions targets.

Last summer all five leaders of the political parties at Holyrood reaffirmed their commitment by signing a pledge (pictured above right) to produce 2016 election manifestos that would deliver on the ambitions of the Act.

Thousands of people took to the streets of Edinburgh and other major cities ahead of the Paris talks last year demonstrating that there is a real public appetite for action on climate change.

The new global climate deal agreed in Paris means that all countries must now deliver on the transformational changes required to meet that deal. If Scotland wants to fulfil its ambition as a credible international leader on climate change it must implement bold action at home.

Strong policies which reduce greenhouse gas emissions can also create warmer homes, reduce harmful air pollution and help us to live more active lifestyles, all of which will reduce burdens on the NHS. Planning and building for the future with climate change at the forefront of our minds will drive innovation, create skilled jobs in renewable energy and boost the economy.



A national commitment to insulating our homes and developing the renewable heat industry will cut our fuel bills and reduce fuel poverty whilst creating more jobs.

The benefits are clear but we must ensure that politicians don't miss these opportunities to build a low carbon Scotland. By investing now, it will be cheaper and easier in the long run to make the changes required to meet our climate commitments in 2020 and beyond.

This briefing will tell you about seven transformational policies which we believe the next Scottish Government should adopt, to secure a low carbon Scotland for the future. The briefing also explains how you could talk about these policies to those candidates seeking your vote.

You will likely have plenty of opportunities to put your points to them at hustings events, online or even on your own doorstep.

We have to ensure that candidates from all parties understand that their prospective constituents want them to work hard to build the fairer, greener Scotland we all need.

KEY CLIMATE QUESTIONS TO RAISE WITH YOUR CANDIDATES

The key point is to let the candidate know that you, like many others, are deeply concerned about climate change and that you want the next Scottish Parliament to take real action to deliver a low-carbon Scotland. We have suggested some specific questions but feel free to put them into your own words.

Summary of Stop Climate Chaos Scotland's key priorities:

Transport
Climate justice
Farming
Energy
Government spending

1 MAKE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF SCOTLAND'S HOMES A NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT



Photo credit: Cathy Yeulet

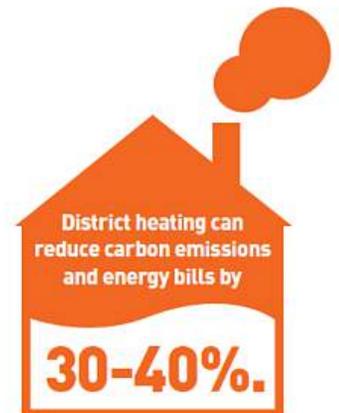
To ensure that every home in Scotland meets a decent standard of warmth and energy efficiency, we need multi-billion pound investment over the next decade. A clear, well-structured scheme directed by Government should ensure that the poorest homes don't miss out and help us all cut our energy waste. By doing this we will create thousands of jobs spread across the country, tackle the scourge of fuel poverty and excess winter deaths whilst delivering substantial emissions reductions.

How will you ensure that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to live in a warm home that meets Energy Performance Certificate standard C?

2 COMMIT TO AND DELIVER A WARM HOMES ACT

Heating our buildings currently accounts for over half of Scotland's climate emissions, but only a tiny 3% of that heating demand comes from renewable sources. The next Scottish Government needs to provide a sound legal framework to develop the low carbon heat market and reassure new customers. By ensuring that we develop district or community heating schemes and renewable-powered heat we'll create jobs, warm homes and could dramatically cut emissions.

How will your party increase the amount of renewable heat generated in Scotland?



3 BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS FOR A LOW CARBON SCOTLAND THROUGH CAPITAL INVESTMENT DECISIONS



Building for the future means investing heavily in low-carbon infrastructure. Currently, when making investment decisions, the Government doesn't fully account for all the emissions that will be created throughout the life of the asset. For example, when building a new road, the carbon emissions of building the road are calculated but not the emissions of all the cars that will drive on it throughout its lifespan. This must change and through honest, low-carbon spending we can drive the innovation and behavioural changes we need.

How will your party ensure that future big infrastructure projects support Scotland's journey to a low-carbon society?

4 A MEANINGFUL SHIFT FROM PRIVATE CAR TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

Transport spending is still overwhelmingly skewed towards the private car, which is more likely to benefit higher earners and men. Transport also accounts for a quarter of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions. The next Scottish Government should introduce measures to discourage the use of the private car where low carbon alternatives exist e.g. 20mph zones, congestion charging, parking levies etc. These policies can cut dangerous air pollution, traffic congestion and reduce climate emissions.

30% of Scottish households do not have access to a car, and over 53% of Scotland's poorest people do not have a driving licence.



Will your party commit to reducing private car use where low carbon alternatives like cycling, walking and public transport could be used? If so, how?

5 USE NEW AIR PASSENGER DUTY POWERS TO CUT CLIMATE EMISSIONS



The current Scottish Government wants to reduce Air Passenger Duty (APD) to encourage more people to fly despite knowing that this would increase carbon emissions. Aviation is the most carbon intensive form of transport and the industry has increased its emissions significantly over the past 20 years. Airlines already don't pay any tax on fuel and airfares are VAT free. Instead of creating yet more advantage for the airline industry, changes to APD should be used to boost low-carbon travel.

How will you use Air Passenger Duty powers to cut ever-rising emissions from aviation?

6 REINFORCE SCOTLAND'S SUPPORT FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

The Scottish Government currently finances a Climate Justice Fund of £3m a year that supports a range of projects in sub-Saharan Africa. The fund is a recognition that developed countries like Scotland have benefited most from burning fossil fuels and that poorer nations who are least responsible feel the impacts first and worst. This support helps developing nations adapt to the impacts of a changing climate. This fund should be protected throughout the next Parliament to protect those who depend on it and enable adequate planning.

Will you increase or sustain Scotland's Climate Justice Fund throughout the next Parliament?



7 COMMIT TO AN AMBITIOUS LAND USE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN



With a clear strategy for use of Scotland's rural land we can significantly decrease emissions from agriculture, and improve both biodiversity and water quality. Land use patterns differ significantly across Scotland's regions so locally appropriate plans must be developed which consider different sectors such as food, forestry and peatlands. However, these should be guided by a national strategy, which directs rural businesses and food sector to a low carbon, climate-proof and sustainable future.

What will you do to make sure all farmers in Scotland reduce emissions, so we can choose to buy more climate-friendly food?

ADVICE ON TALKING TO CANDIDATES



- Don't worry about being an expert on the issues. The most important thing for them to know is that you care about the issue. They want your vote. Remember too that most of them are standing for election because they actually want to bring about positive change, so you caring about this issue gives them a mandate to act upon it.
- Their time will probably be limited so have a think about what you want to say before you meet them or they turn up at your door. It might help to write your question down so you say exactly what you want.
- Be polite but don't be afraid to ask a follow up question or ask for clarification if you feel they have not answered your question.
- When you're talking about your concern for climate action, give them evidence that you're not a lone voice. Tell them about friends and family or people in your community who care and are taking action.
- Take note of what your candidates commit to so you can follow up with them if they get elected.
- You can direct candidates to www.stopclimatechaos.org if they wish to follow up on the detail of what you asked them.
- If you are talking to candidates online, remember to be as polite as you would be in person.

FIND OUT WHERE YOU CAN MEET YOUR CANDIDATES

For a list of events across the country where members of the public can meet with your candidates in person, in a supportive environment, visit www.stopclimatechaos.org/scotland/events.

ABOUT STOP CLIMATE CHAOS SCOTLAND

Stop Climate Chaos is a diverse coalition of organisations in Scotland campaigning together on climate change. Our members include environment, faith and international development organisations, trade and student unions and community groups.

We played a key role in the development of Scotland's Climate Change Act in 2009 and we continue to work to ensure that we meet the emissions targets it contains.

