

## COP26: The Road to Glasgow

**What is COP26:** COP26 is the 26th annual meeting of the 'Conference of Parties' on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This is the international framework through which governments agree action to limit global emissions.

**Where:** COP26 is being held in the SEC in Glasgow, Scotland.

**When:** from 1-12th November 2021.

### Why is the Glasgow summit so important?

#### Global

COP26 is an important moment for global climate policy. Scientists have warned that if global warming is not kept below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, the consequences are irreversible. At COP26, for the first time each nation will be asked to set a date for achieving net-zero carbon emissions. This is a more powerful objective than previous agreements, as net zero sets out a vision for carbon neutrality. Governments are also required to make explicit pledges about what they will achieve by 2030.

Ahead of COP26, governments have been increasing their commitments. The COP is an opportunity for these to be stated and welcomed globally, and also to welcome the return of the United States to the Paris Agreement.

#### UK

In April 2021, the UK Government commitment to cut carbon emissions 78% from 1991 levels by 2035. It extended these targets to include emissions from international aviation and shipping. At COP26, the UK Government will have two roles:

- As the UK holds the presidency of COP26, it will play a key role in shaping discussion and ambition at the meeting. It can use this role to secure global commitments, and drive just and fair outcomes from talks.
- As a member of the COP, the UK Government need to commit to its own ambitious targets for net-zero, and outline plans to achieve them.

### What needs to happen at COP26?

A successful COP26 meeting would be one where:

- The UK government is held to account on its own commitments for climate action
- The government uses the UK presidency to achieve progress on the international agenda for just and fair solutions to the climate crisis

### Our values: what are the churches saying?

**Caring for God's creation** - A central calling of Christianity is to live in a way which enables both people and planet to flourish. As Churches and as part of a wider body of

faiths, we have a strong moral voice to bring as we approach COP26.

**Just and Fair commitments** - We need to recognise the injustices of the climate crisis, and work towards responses that are fair for everyone. Higher emitting countries must commit to ambitious targets for emissions reduction, as well as paying their fair share to support rebuilding and resilience. Lower emitting countries already on the frontlines need to be able to shape decisions about their own future.

**Local, national, global** - As Christians, we recognise that our neighbours spread across the world, from local to national to global. Our calling to love our neighbour means that we have a responsibility to seek partnership, listen well and prioritise the needs of others.

**Advocacy and Transformation** - As a Church, we can take this opportunity to reflect on our own complicity in the climate crisis, and the steps we can take towards change. At the same time, we can amplify our commitment to climate justice by calling on the UK government to do the same.

## Spotlight on: Policy Campaigns

### **UK Carbon reduction and net zero**

In April 2021, the UK Government committed to cut carbon emissions 78% from 1991 levels by 2035. However, there has so far been a gap between the pledges the UK government has made and the action they have taken to meet them. COP26 will be an opportunity to encourage the government to commit to concrete action to close the gaps and keep the UK on track for net zero.

### **Stop funding the expansion of fossil fuel energy**

The UK subsidises fossil fuels by directly financing UK oil and gas projects, charging a discounted 5% VAT rate for gas and electricity usage, and freezing fuel duty successive budgets. Through 'Make COP Count', faith groups will be asking the UK Government to end fossil fuel subsidies in the UK.

### **International climate finance**

Countries on the frontlines of the climate crisis often do not have sufficient funds to deal with loss and damage, resulting in an incredibly unequal and unjust impact from global warming. There has been little progress at successive COP meetings to get finance to address loss and damage on the agenda. Faith communities are calling for action to protect and support vulnerable people in the long term.

## The journey to COP26

Whilst the 10 days of the COP26 Conference in Glasgow are important, the months leading up play a big role. Governments meet together to discuss targets, spur ambition

and make commitments. Negotiating is done by national teams, and other global summits create the momentum for action.

### **11-13th June: G7 – Carbis Bay**

Leaders from the G7 countries will meet in Carbis Bay, Cornwall, with a focus on rebuilding from the pandemic. This will set a precedent for discussions at COP26, including the issues profiled and the level of commitment demonstrated.

### **The YCCN Relay Begins : [www.yccn.uk](http://www.yccn.uk)**

The Young Christian Climate Network are calling on churches in the UK to 'Rise to the moment', and journey to COP26 together. Starting at the G7 in Carbis Bay, they'll be walking to Glasgow throughout the Summer and Autumn, stopping off at locations on the route. They're carrying the call for climate justice and creation care to be part of our theology and action.

### **5th September: Climate Sunday Service – Glasgow Cathedral: [www.climatesunday.org](http://www.climatesunday.org)**

The ecumenical Climate Sunday initiative will culminate in a collective service at Glasgow Cathedral. Pledges, commitments and worship from churches across the UK will be drawn together, to show the UK's commitment to seeking climate justice.

### **1st September – 4th October: Season of Creation**

Churches around the world come together to celebrate God our creator, and dedicate time in worship and prayer to explore our relationship with creation.

### **28th – 30th September: "Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition" – Youth COP in Milan**

Just before the Pre COP meetings, young people from around the world will come together to explore some of the key policies at play at COP26. After working groups, representatives will meet with delegates to the Pre COP, to discuss ideas.

### **18th to 26th September: The Great Big Green Week: <https://greatbiggreenweek.com> and Climate Fringe Week (Scotland): [www.climatefringe.org](http://www.climatefringe.org)**

A national week of events celebrating action on climate change, to set the stage for COP26.

### **13<sup>th</sup> September – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021 – Pre Cop26 in Milan**

One month before the COP, a selected group of countries meet in an informal setting to explore some of the key political aspects to negotiations. This helps to shape the political context for subsequent negotiations at COP26.

### **1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> November: COP26 Glasgow**

COP26 takes place in Glasgow. Delegates will come together for 10 days of negotiations, discussion and events. Depending on Covid regulations, climate activists from around the world are likely to travel to Glasgow in their thousands, celebrating and calling for

ambitious action for the climate. Fringe events will take place around the COP meeting, for civil society and faith groups.

## What can you do?

### Hold a Climate Sunday

Climate Sunday is the largest ecumenical initiative in the UK leading up to COP26. We're inviting every church in the UK to hold a climate service to consider prayerfully the actions you could take as a community for creation.

Register your Climate Sunday to be part of the bigger picture and show the UK's commitment to seeking climate justice.

Register your Climate Sunday here: <https://climatesunday.org>

### Rise to the moment: YCCN Relay

The Young Christian Climate Network are organising a relay walk, between the G7 in Cornwall and COP26 in Glasgow. Their calling on the UK Church to 'Rise to the moment', and play our part in the important decisions being made right on our doorstep. As the relay comes through your area, gather your community together to support, and celebrate the UK Church's call for climate justice. Get involved here: <https://www.yccn.uk/>

### Dig deeper into the issues:

Make COP Count is an interfaith collective, bringing together advocacy around key policy areas at play in COP26.

Explore their briefings on some of the key issues here: <https://makecopcount.org/>

## Our partners

Christian Aid: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved-locally/scotland/preparing-cop26>

The Climate Coalition: <https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/>

Climate Justice for All: <https://worldmethodistcouncil.org/cj4a/>

Make COP count: <https://makecopcount.org/>

## Get in touch

You can keep in touch with JPIT on our website and social media, or send us an email.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/PublicIssues>

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