

COP26 – Guide and Action

COP 26 takes place in Glasgow between 31 October and 11 November 2021

****** UPDATED Links for events on 6 November (demonstration), 7-10 November (People's Summit) in Calendar at bottom of this article. ******

What is the COP and why is COP26 important?

COP 26 is so-called because it is the 26th “Conference of the Parties” (COP) called under the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC), established in 1992. The COP is meant to take place annually and rotate around the world. COP26 is important because it is scheduled to review the key agreement at COP21 in Paris in 2015 that established governmental actions intended to prevent global temperatures rising above 1.5 degrees Celsius from 1992 levels by 2030. The “Parties” in the COP are the member states of the United Nations, so in the case of Scotland that means that we are represented by the United Kingdom (Westminster) Government of Boris Johnson, not the Scottish Government based at Holyrood, Edinburgh. The UK Government originally proposed hosting COP26 during November 2020, but it got postponed by 12 months due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. COP26 will be important because the government of the USA under Donald Trump had withdrawn from COP process but following the election of Biden as US President, in January 2021 the USA rejoined the COP process.

What will happen at COP26?

The COP26 Conference takes place at the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) conference centre on the north side of the River Clyde in Glasgow. The conference is attended by delegations from every country represented at the United Nations, large and small. As well as the governments of powerful industrialised countries such as the USA, UK, China, Germany, France, Australia, Russia, Canada etc, there are also delegations from poorer countries much more directly affected by climate change, from the Global South in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and from the many island nations desperately affected by rising sea levels but often unable to have their voices heard, such as those organised in the Association of Small Island States. COP25 in 2019 was meant to have been in the southern hemisphere in Chile, but an urban uprising for peoples' rights in the capital Santiago meant that the UN shifted it to Madrid Spain. Ensuring that the voice of the poorer countries of the world especially from the Global South are heard at COP26 is a major issue.

The UK Government of Boris Johnson's Conservative and Unionist Party is formally the host of COP26 and it is already seeking to ensure a big voice for the fossil fuel industry that we need to combat.

But as well as governments of UN member states and industrial lobbyists, there are also a large number of "civil society" organisations represented at COP events. These range from various weak UN and governmental lobbying organisations to more activist-based campaign groups such as organisations of indigenous peoples, Amazonian rainforest activists, and Western-based groups like Friends of the Earth Scotland and Global Justice Now. The UK based organisations campaigning for an alternative perspective have formed the **UK COP26 Coalition** to coordinate activities which so far have included organising two major online events called *From the Ground Up*

in November 2020 and April 2021.

COP is formally a “UN process” and preparatory events will also take place in Bonn, Germany in the summer of 2021 and in Milan, Italy 28-30 September 2021, where there will also be a UN-inspired “Youth event”.

Protest action around COP26

Throughout the COP26 there will be protest hubs and actions at various locations around Glasgow, starting from Sunday 31 October 2021. Inspired by the major demonstrations at previous COPs and the recent Fridays for the Future/School Climate Strike protest movement, the **UK COP26 Coalition** is planning a major demonstration in Glasgow in the middle Saturday of the COP event – **Saturday 6 November 2021**. As we don't yet know whether there will be much in the way of international travel or of a physical gathering at the COP, due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, it is likely that any demonstration on the streets of Glasgow to put pressure on the delegates at COP26 will also be organised in conjunction with globe-wide campaigns for simultaneous protests in cities and communities across the world. There is also a discussion as to whether there should be a call for a **Global Climate Strike on Friday 5 November 2021** to build on the success of Fridays for the Future in schools across the world, and encourage workplace-based actions by trade unions to demand stronger action including a Just Transition for workers.

A centrepiece of the action in Scotland running up to COP26 will be the demand for the closure of one of Scotland's worst polluters and carbon emitters – the Mossmorran Plant in Fife – jointly run by Exxon/Shell. As well as making a major contribution to carbon emissions, the Mossmorran plant has been the centrepiece of local environmental concerns due to its frequent and repeated flaring – plumes of surplus burning gas shooting hundreds of metres into the air and lighting up

the skies such that it can be seen as far away as Edinburgh city some 40-50 kms away. The Scottish Government and their toothless Scottish Environmental Protection Agency have steadfastly refused to close this plant and put forward a Just Transition plan for its workforce. Pressure will be stepped up throughout 2021 with organisations like Climate Camp Scotland and the local resident-led Mossmorran Action Group leading the battle.

The Faslane military base lies along the Clyde river some 25 miles/40 kilometres west of the COP26 venue in Glasgow. It is the sole home of the UK state's nuclear weapons arsenal of Trident submarines and warheads and a major part of NATO's strategic nuclear arsenal. The Conservative UK government recently announced a massive increase in the number of nuclear warheads to be based at Faslane. There has been a peace camp at Faslane since 1982 to protest against nuclear weapons and the majority of the population of Scotland have repeatedly voted for parties that want to end nuclear weapons in Scotland and the UK. The Faslane base will once again become the centre of protest in the run-up to COP26 to demonstrate the linkage of the issues of nuclear weapons and the environmental crisis.

Many environmental activists in Scotland are also aware that the only way of securing effective climate action in Scotland is to support independence from the UK state – where the UK Government of Boris Johnson's Tories, who have little support in Scotland, continue to refuse effective action around climate change. While the SNP-led Scottish Government also has a poor record and has repeatedly defended fossil fuel industries, we in *ecosocialist.scot* believe that it is necessary to campaign for a democratic independent Scotland to lead the way in challenging climate change globally. On 6 May 2021 Scottish voters put a clear majority of elected members (MSPs) in the Scottish Parliament who support independence. There will undoubtedly be an intermingling of the demands for

Scottish independence and for effective climate action that will unfold in the run up to COP26.

Is it worth campaigning around COP26?

There are some in the climate movement who argue we should not get involved in COPs at all, as nothing will come of an institutional setting based on governments – they argue instead just for direct action at a local level. *ecosocialist.scot* understands and respects these arguments, but we do not agree. We believe it is necessary to do **both**: to put demands on the governments of the world to commit themselves to international coordinated action that will keep the increase in temperatures to below 1.5 degrees C, **and** to organise a mass movement supporting direct action within countries to mobilise popular pressure on governments, business and across society for effective climate action. Ultimately we know that only system change – **an ecosocialist transformation of society** – can stop the destruction of the planet. However, the climate change crisis is such that we do not have time to wait for the revolution – we need to demand action by our governments **now** through mass campaigns, while building the organisations and ideas that will lead us to the transformation of society into what we need to save the planet and nature based on a new relationship between human society and our natural environment. The stakes are too high and the urgency too great to stand aside from the COP26.

How can I get involved?

If you are based in Scotland, *ecosocialist.scot* will be following the COP26 process closely and getting involved in action, so sign up for our regular newsletter in the box alongside this article. You should also sign up to the UK COP26 newsletter, **The Rising Clyde**, and you will also find

links to this below and under our Latest News and Links section on the right. There are numerous organisations meeting regularly in Scotland that you can join and get involved with, we list the most important with links below. For those of you outside Scotland, we look forward to the possibility of welcoming you to Glasgow in November 2021 and you can contact us as at info@ecosocialist.scot.

Links to COP26/Scottish Climate Change Organisations

[UK COP26 Coalition](#) – the broad based UK-wide coalition organising alternative protests at COP26. The coalition has a variety of working groups that you can join, including a Scotland activist network, and working groups meeting regularly on Political Strategy, Mobilisations, and to organise a Glasgow Welcome. Sign up to **The Rising Clyde** newsletter [here](#).

[Stop Climate Chaos Scotland](#) – the broad based Scottish environmental coalition and organisation involved in the above

[Climate Scotland](#) is a campaign and website launched by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland and others to highlight the action needed in the run up to COP26 (press release [here](#))

[Climate Camp Scotland](#) – a direct action based network of activists organising civil disobedience and protest actions around Scotland.

[Mossmorran Action Group](#) – a resident-led local campaign group against the joint Exxon/Shell industrial complex at Mossmorran, Fife.

[ScotE3: Employment, Energy & Environment](#) – a trade union focussed campaign particularly concentrating on organisation in the workplace, especially campaigning around oil and gas

production and processing in the North Sea zone and building support for the Just Transition in the Scottish workforce and unions.

[Friends of the Earth Scotland](#) – Scotland’s largest individual membership environmental campaign, providing a variety of protest and political campaigns.

[Just Transition Scotland](#) – a joint campaign involving FoES, Scottish Trade Union Congress and others focussing on the need for a Just Transition for those working in fossil fuel industries.

[Just and Green Recovery Scotland](#) – a joint campaign involving FoES and a wide range of campaign and civil society organisations calling for a post-covid recovery in Scotland that puts environmental and related concerns above the demands of big business.

[Glasgow Calls Out the Polluters](#) – a grassroots based campaign in Glasgow and Scotland aiming to deny a voice for fossil fuel industries at COP26.

[Extinction Rebellion Scotland](#) – a direct action based activist movement, campaigning on wider environmental issues and supporting the establishment of Citizen’s Assemblies for Scotland. There is an XR Scotland COP26 specific page here: <https://xrscotland.org/cop-26/>

The [Faslane Peace Camp](#) is a permanent protest against the Trident submarine-based nuclear weapons in Scotland and is situated 25 miles west of Glasgow. It is supported by the [Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament](#).

And organisations beyond Scotland:

[Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group](#) – a longstanding UK based group campaigning in UK wide trade unions. Produced the seminal [“One Million Climate Jobs a](#)

Year" pamphlet.

[Global Ecosocialist Network](#) – a network of Ecosocialist groups from different countries around that world, that ecosocialist.scot is part of.

Calendar


Significant forthcoming events will be noted here.



Sat 31 July – 1 August 2021 Climate Camp Scotland will be protesting against the Mossmorran plant in Fife. Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/events/1207302893024398/>

Mon 23 August 2021 Extinction Rebellion protests begin in London

Fri 24 September 2021 Fridays for the Future global day of action in schools [NB School holiday in Glasgow area]

 **Sat 18 – 26 September 2021** Climate Fringe Week Scotland <https://climatefringe.org/week/> and The Great Big Green Week (Rest of UK) <https://greatbiggreenweek.com/> A week of action and events across the UK to protest climate change.

Thu 30 September – 2 October 2021 “Pre COP” UN gathering, Milan, Italy

Sat 30 October 2021 G20 Summit Rome, Italy

Sun 31 October 2021 Start of COP26 alternative gathering in Glasgow.

 **Fri 5 November 2021** Global Climate Strike day

Sat 6 November 2021 Global Day of Action for Climate Justice.
Major demonstration in **Glasgow**: gather at Kelvingrove Park 11,30am, march to Glasgow Green via George Square, details here:

<https://actionnetwork.org/events/glasgow-global-day-of-action-for-climate-justice-6th-nov>. There will be various contingents on the demonstration including: Indigenous Peoples, Youth, Trade Union, Migrant Justice, **Independence** (for supporters of Scottish Independence) and others. There will also be local actions in London (Bank of England to Hyde Park) , across the UK and internationally. Map of actions and contacts here: <https://cop26coalition.org/gda/> _ For the **Independence Contingent on the Glasgow March**, organised by Radical Independence Campaign and COP26 Coalition, details here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/289305642729420/>

☒ **Sun 7-9 November 2021** COP26 Alternative Peoples' Summit in Glasgow. Three days of alternative gatherings and meetings. <https://cop26coalition.org/peoples-summit/>

Calendar updated as at 5 October 2021