Witness Seminar: How has the Environmental Movement influenced policy and legislation in the UK?

Convened for the Oral History of the Environmental Movement Project

This account of the meeting was based on a transcript that has been judiciously corrected, edited and some minor additions to make to make it more concise, and easy to read for general circulation. We have endeavoured to check name spellings, but it has not always been possible to contact every participant to confirm, so please be cautious in this regard, and note that the spoken word is not always grammatical.

The meeting was held on the 28th of February, 2025 at the Conservatory at Birkbeck College in Malet St, London.

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Participants (in alphabetical order):

Tom Burke, Founder of E3G, Government advisor, Former Director of Friends of the Earth
Nigel Doar, Director of Policy and research, Wildlife Trusts
Nigel Haigh, Founder of IEEP, EEB, Green Alliance
Areeba Hamid, Joint CEO, Greenpeace UK
Fiona Harvey, Environment Editor, The Guardian
Vicki Hird, Agriculture Lead, the Wildlife Trusts, formerly Sustain
Stephen Joseph, Former CEO CBT / T2000
Harriet Lamb, CEO WRAP, formerly CEO Ashden
Jonathon Porritt, Founder Forum for the Future, former Director FoE
Shaun Spiers, CEO, Green Alliance
Joanna Watson, Comms Manager, Policy & Insight, FoE

OHEM project team members in attendance from Royal Holloway, University of London

Dr Barbara Brayshay, Post-doctoral Researcher
Dr Toby Butler, Reader in Geography
Chris Church, Project Officer
Professor Felix Driver, Geography
Jeremy Iles, External Liaison Officer*
Dr Saskia Papadakis, Post-doctoral Researcher

*Jeremy Iles was both a seminar speaker and project member at this event.

Key	
[inaud] - inaudible word or phrase [incomp] - incomprehensible word or phrase	[sp?] – spelling unclear/unknown [?] – substantial section where audio is inaudible

Session 1: How has policy work evolved over the decades from 1970 to 2020?

Jeremy Iles: *Go ahead. All right. Hello. Good. Good afternoon. Thanks for coming to the Oral History of the Environmental Movement project space at Royal Holloway University. We've got quite a few members of the team. All six of us are here. Saskia, hand up, Felix, Chris, Barbara, me and Toby's around. Toby's behind the curtains. He's hiding behind the Arras. It's not a literary workshop.*

It's 42 years ago. 42 years ago, I started working at Friends of the Earth. And some of you I've known for that long. And some of you I haven't known for that long. And quite a few people in the project that we've interviewed have been around in the movement for that long and/or longer. The projects came about because Chris and me and Barbara started talking about this in 2016, and it was a sort of idea that we were all getting a bit older, and should we do something about this before people leave us or we can't find them or whatever else? So Chris, Barbara and I put together a proposal to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which after a year and a half of discussions and sort of tweaking our bids, they rejected it outright. So that was probably 2018, and we were pretty demoralized and just went "Oh, sod that".

*But then, a certain chain of events happened and *XR sprung out of the woodwork and started, we felt having a sort of bit of a, a mantra that nobody had ever done anything in the environmental movement before, and we're going to save the world. And fair enough, they've done a fantastic job, let's not criticize. But, some of us also felt that's not quite the whole story here, so let's try and reactivate this project.*

So the three of us got back together and then we got Covid (or not. We didn't get Covid. Covid came). So at that point, it was extraordinarily difficult to do any negotiations and networking. But through the networks that Barbara had, we got in touch with Toby, who'd had contact with Royal Holloway before and was an oral historian. He got in contact with the British Library, and then Felix got involved. And so, the project took off without us actually having met each other. A lot of us hadn't actually met until the funding was approved, which was in 2022. So this is now in the third year of the project. Do you want to just put up your couple of slides very quickly?

So we're basically looking at 1970 to 2020. The seven of us, mainly academics, but Chris and myself are the sort of two outliers. Funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council and supported by the partners at the British Library, Royal Geographical Society, Friends of the Earth and the Wildlife Trusts. We're doing 100 interviews with people across the decades, and the recordings in transcripts go to the National Life Stories Archive in the

British Library. There'll be a book coming out next year, and the archive will be free and theoretically there in perpetuity.

So this is what we're calling a witness seminar, and it's one in a series of witness seminars that have been organized in conjunction with the project. This is the third in-person one. We had two online seminars before. One was for people in Northern Ireland, one was with youth. Last year, we had one at Camley Street Natural Park, which was about green infrastructure. Just in January we had one which is about activism through sound and art, and this is the one about policy influencing. And then there'll be two more, one in Wales on March the 20th and one in Glasgow on June the 5th, which will be Welsh and Scottish focused, obviously, in both of those.

So this is really the seminar to get some of you to just reflect on your experiences. That's all I need to say. And Saskia is going to be running the first session. I'm just going to be keeping a little bit of an eye on the time overall. We started probably ten minutes late, but bearing that in mind, I'll keep an eye on it. So have a good time and enjoy yourselves. Thank you.

[00:03:56]

Toby Butler: *Thanks, Jeremy. The other thing to say is if the chairpeople could remember to introduce speakers, that means the transcriber will know who's saying what. Because we're going to have the whole thing transcribed. So enjoy the day. Thanks.*

[00:04:32]

Saskia Papadakis: *All right. Thank you, Jeremy and Toby, for the introductions. I'm really delighted to be here. I'm Saskia Papadakis. I've been a postdoctoral researcher on this project for the past two years, and I've had the pleasure of interviewing some of the people in the room. And, yeah, it's been an absolute pleasure getting to know some of you and finding out more about the environmental movement. So I'm really excited to be here today.*

So the way it's going to work is you can see we've got a panel here of experts. And the first session is on how policy work has evolved from the decades from 1970 to 2020. And our kind of key witnesses to the witness seminar are, Nigel Haigh, who is an honorary fellow of the Institute for European Environmental Policy. We've got Vicky Hird, who's currently agricultural lead at the Wildlife Trust and was also at Sustain. And Shaun Spiers, who is the executive director of the Green Alliance. So we're going to open with some interventions from our initial speakers, and then I'll open it up to the rest of the panel for the last part of the session. Yeah, as Toby said, it's very helpful for us if you can introduce yourself before you speak, and I'll try and remind you if that doesn't quite happen. But yeah, just helps us with the transcription afterwards. So yeah, to, kick us off, Nigel, would you like to?

[00:06:06]

Nigel Haigh: Well, I'm asked to introduce how policy has evolved from 1970. And 1970 is a good date to start, because that is the year when environmental ministries began to sprout among developed countries and eventually other countries as well. In fact, the DOE, the Development of the Environment in the UK, was the very first, the French Ministry of the Environment followed a few months later, and then the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was also founded in that year. And then a couple of years later, the EU, called EEC in those days, adopted the first action program on the environment and had a dedicated unit called the Environmental and Consumer Protection Service. So environmental policy then becomes institutionalized in 1970.

But those things don't happen just like that, they have precursors. The most important date, actually, is 1972, with the great United Nations Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. And preparations for that had begun and begun in the late '60s, I think '68. And the knowledge of this stimulated countries to think what they were going to say at this conference and what their policies were, and that generated the steam for national ministries to be formed. But then the United Nations doesn't have a conference out of the blue, it has a conference because there is pressure from it and the pressure from it came not from governments, but from civil society, from academics, writing, from organized environment groups in America. The student movement of '68 created a great deal of pressure for it. So, there was a great upsurge of interest in the environment in the '60s.

The Council of Europe, for example, had designated 1970 as European Conservation Year. And that, in Britain, stimulated countryside in 1970 conferences, which brought the traditional established British bodies like the National Trust, the RSPB, into contact with new ideas about global limits which had been developed by individual thinkers.

And there were a lot of books in the United States in particular. Paul Ehrlich, The Population Bomb. Barry Coleman, Science and Society. Rachel Carson, Silent Spring. An earlier one, which I read as a student in 1960, was an essay by Aldous Huxley called Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, in which I read for the first time this idea that the Earth was finite, the resources on it were finite, the amount that we were using per head of population was increasing, the world population was increasing, and this was bound to end in tears. So that idea was there in the early '60s, spread and created the pressure. Now, this resulted in the great explosion of civic, civil society organizations throughout the world.

Then, so in 1970, you have ministries, and if you take the UK Department of the Environment, which I began studying. I spent four years, from 1980 to 1984, looking at the impact of the EU on the UK. So, I had to study UK policy. Not an easy thing to do because it wasn't written down. You can't find it in the law. British policy is what people do, whereas EU policy is what is written down in laws. So EU policy is explicit, British policy is diffused, incredibly diffused in those days. There was mostly a local government function. And what the Department of the Environment did was to try to bring these strands together. And its first act of Parliament, the 1973 Water Act, brought about 1000 different bodies together into the 12 regional water authorities. They didn't create a National Rivers Authority. They created 12 regional water authorities because the prevailing view was that these functions should be devolved to local authorities and to specialized agencies. A national policy was about *[inaud – drawing the?] threads together. It wasn't about global issues in the early years. That didn't really happen until the '80s, with the ozone layer, acid rain and climate change. And everybody here will remember Mrs. Thatcher's famous speech, to the Royal Society in 1988, in which she said that acid rain and the ozone layer and climate change were the three issues which would dominate policy, environment policy, for the rest of the century.

And she went on to make a the first speech that the royal, at the United Nations, calling for a climate change convention. So Britain was actually quite a leader. The '80s saw EU policy having a big impact in the UK. And indeed at that point you can say that Britain became an implementer of EU policies. Policies were being made at EU level.

It was only, as I said, in the late '80s, that global issues, and really that the key date there is obviously the Rio conference of 1992, which produced the Climate Convention, the Biodiversity Convention, a forestry declaration, and Agenda 21, which stimulated local authorities throughout the world to take action. So this linkage between local action *[inaud] is great statement. Think globally, act locally.

So I think that's enough as an introduction to how it happened. What happened from the '80s and '90s onwards I'll leave other speakers to say, but I will give one example of an influence on national policy. In the late 80s, Mrs. Thatcher decided on a policy of privatization and water was to be privatized. And there was a huge national debate about water privatization. Many people got quite agitated about it, and *The Times* wrote a *[inaud] attacking it. I then contributed a letter to *The Times*. It was a respectable newspaper in those days, and you wrote letters to *The Times* to start a debate. And I said that there was one point that needed to be thought about, and that was that privatizing the water authorities in their present form, as proposed, involved not only

privatizing the services of sewage and drinking water, but also the regulatory functions that the water authorities perform. They granted authorizations to industrialists to discharge to rivers, and that was governed by EU law, which required a "competent authority" to grant you authorization, which effectively is a definition in law between a legal and an illegal act. And I said, was it consistent with EU law for a competent authority to be a private company answerable to its shareholders? And I went on to say before the government privatizes, they better ask the commission for an opinion, because then any time the commission could say it wasn't consistent with EU law and would take Britain to the court.

Now, I wrote that letter, published in *The Times*. My good friend Robin Grove-White, then director of CPRE, who knew I was writing this letter because I talked to him about it. He said, look, once you've published the letter, I will say that CPRE, it will seek judicial review about the legality of any bill once it's issued with it's privatized regulatory functions. And his, CPRE's, legal adviser was Richard Macrory. He was CPRE's honorary counsel. And he said, well, look, we better get counsel's opinion as to whether Haigh is right or wrong. And he recommended Francis Jacobs QC, as a specialist in EU law, whom the government frequently used in cases before the European Court, and whose opinion, therefore, would be very difficult for the government to ignore. Well, Francis Jacobs produced an opinion to say, *Hague is right. If the water authorities are, privatized in their current form, that would be open to challenge and could go to the European Court.

Now, the consequences of that would completely scarper the privatization proposal, because you couldn't in your prospectus say there are no legal impediments to it. You don't say there's an open question and nobody would buy shares and it will completely torpedo, the privatization. But what then happened was that we heard from officials that they were going to tough it out. Then suddenly, Nicholas Ridley, the Secretary of State, at a Tory party conference without consulting his officials, said we are going to separate the regulatory functions from the service functions of sewage and drinking water. We will privatize the service functions and we will transfer the regulatory functions to a newly created National Rivers Authority. Okay. And that's what happened.

And sometime later, a minister of the Crown, Lord Belstead, said at a private meeting that *[inaud] it was your your triggering of that point which triggered that. So this is a clear example of an NGO IEP raising a legal point, which had the consequences of an entire change of policy that the regulatory functions would –

And the creation of the NRA, incidentally, led, some years later, the Environment Agency to be created. So if that hadn't happened, you wouldn't have had it. That's my story.

[00:17:17]

Saskia Papadakis: *Thank you very much for that introduction. I'd just like to take a second to welcome Areeba Hamid who is one of the co-executive directors of Greenpeace. And so we'll just continue with the program as it is. So we'll come to you third if that's okay. But yeah, first I'd like to invite Vicki to?*

[00:17:36]

Vicki Hird: Thank you very much. It's fascinating listening to Nigel because I remember starting my career in the environment world and movement in the waterways and toxics campaign of Friends of the Earth back in 1989. And back then, it was focused - it was recycling, it was pesticides and resource use. And I remember one of the things that we called for was a policy to change leaking underground storage tanks. And I did notice recently there was a leaking underground storage tank that's destroyed, well, done a huge amount of harm to a river very recently. So we haven't won all these years later.

So that was 35 years ago. But the thread through my work and through what I'm going to talk about, very briefly, is around the land used for food production and farming, because given that it's such a huge part of, land use in the UK in particular. It's very, very high land use in the UK compared to many other countries used for farming, but also globally it's one of the main causes of pollution and biodiversity loss. And I was lucky to start at Friends of the Earth with, a giant of the environmental movement, Andrew Lees. And after working on pesticides, in, that's what I did my masters in - pest management and agricultural background. I was working a bit with Andrew around his campaign to get policy that would get farmers and growers to farm with nature in mind, more sustainably. Agri-environment, as it was sometimes called. And there were some new schemes which were voluntary back then, which were under article 19 of the Common Agricultural Policy. I think that was what it was. My mind is slightly fuzzy. But the Common Agricultural Policy, we were subject to as part of the European Union, which was the means by which we'd regulate farming, but mostly just pay it for being farmers.

But there was this group of organizations, including Andrew, including Friends of the Earth calling for a better use of that resource to green farming, effectively. And that article *[inaud], and there was some brilliant examples that Andrew could call on to show, in Norfolk, I think, escapes me. Anyway, good examples to show that you can do that. And farmers can change

their, activities to protect their water course, for instance, or a forest, or to reduce their chemical use. And then over the years to just bring it to the policy agenda.

Over the years, the campaigning got louder as organization conservation organizations got very, very active in this area. And they might have enacted before but I was at Friends of the Earth. I was totally Friends of the Earth at the time, but all the other organizations, like the RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, were getting very loud here and across Europe to call for more. And so we had regulation 2078, which was regulation under the Rural Development Regulation. Article 2078 I think. Which allowed countries to implement and use some of their modulated Common Agricultural Policy payments to farmers to pay them to farm in environmental ways.

So I spent the next few years in another organization called Sustain, which was back then called Sustainable Agriculture. Sorry, Safe Alliance, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development. Hell, I can't remember the name. Anyway. Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Environment Alliance, I can't believe I can't remember that. Anyway, so that organization I ended up running and we went across the country introducing farmers across the country to this new set of six policies: an environmental land management scheme, organic aid scheme, a moorland scheme. And this was all very new. And I was sitting above pubs talking to farmers about something completely new to them compared to what they'd been used to in the past, which was direct payments and schemes to buy their milk if the price wasn't high enough, which created milk lakes. There was loads of reasons why we saw a move in this direction as being really important, and the UK government, which was initially a Conservative government doing that, so they got on with it. There were some good conservative ministers, Gummer and Boswell and various others who actually embraced this. They did see conservation as being an important policy agenda. And so this sort of going forward. And then it got louder and louder across Europe. And we had a different leader in the agriculture, sections at the European Commission, Fischler, Franz Fischler, who was really up for doing more on this and we had the Fischler reforms.

But I haven't got time to sort of go through all the many ups and downs of agri-environment policy at European and UK level, but as a critical way in which we could start to introduce a new way of farming for environmental benefits, nature benefits and increasingly climate goals and carbon goals. This was critical and it did have some real doldrums. Real, you know, the budget was always squeezed by the budget for basically farmers being farmers. And farmers are incredibly squeezed. And I might just touch on that as well, as part of the way in which we haven't done what we needed to do, which was tackle the whole of the supply chain.

But just to finish off what we, over the noughties, agri-environment schemes started, you know, got bigger. There was more money allocated, 25% of the cap budget, more or less. But obviously it was a lot of watering down, a lot of pressure not to make these too onerous for farmers, because the pressure from the supply chain from the, farm gate was so strong. To have ever cheaper, more uniform, lower price, goods for an increasingly commoditized and processed food system. So you've got these twin pressures on the farming, on the farmers, and on the farmed land and on the animals in particular over the noughties and the '90s. And each country in Europe had to implement a rural development program that included these agri-environment schemes and some did more than others. The UK did quite well, but it became very bureaucratic, and there were a lot of boxes to tick to prove that you'd sort of done what you've done. And the UK government was accused of gold plating, some of the policies from Europe, when in fact we really weren't tackling the biggest problems in farming - the loss of habitats, the pollution from pesticides and nitrogen fertilizer and antibiotics and the animal welfare issues, that lead to environmental harm. All these things were still going more or less in the wrong direction with some islands of good practice and some good things. And meanwhile we were getting stronger policies on pesticide pollution in rivers because the pesticide campaigning from organizations like Friends of the Earth and IEP and others. So there's sort of lots and lots of regulation, a bit of money to help what are effectively, almost all SMEs, small and medium enterprises, which make up the bulk of farmers. Getting them to do things differently requires them to be supported both financially and advice and demonstration and research is another area which I probably don't have time to go into.

But when I was at Friends of the Earth, the second time, which is around 2004, we wanted to find out why farmers weren't able to do what we wanted them to do on pesticides. We had a big pesticide campaign. Big evidence was growing. That's another sort of strand of what changed policies. More and more evidence and really good research was showing toddlers being affected badly by residues, pesticides in their food. And there was a really stark evidence of that. So we actually did a survey of farmers and that showed that the main reason farmers couldn't do what they needed to do to reduce their pesticide use was the demands they were getting from supermarkets and there's a whole load of things behind that.

But cut a long story short, it became increasingly clear that we needed to tackle supply chains and they were so dominant. And in fact, one was becoming ever more dominant, called Tesco. It was really growing its market share very rapidly. And so in the, you know, classic way of campaigning, we focused on - We used Tesco as the big baddie. It wasn't the only baddie. But

the fact that it was growing market share, it had huge power in the supply chain. It could pay farmers very little and farmers couldn't do much about it. It could demand perfect produce. You know, that's one of the big reasons why we've got a lot of waste and a lot of chemicals, because demand –

Anyway, cutting it very short, very, very complicated campaigning. We went to court, we took the government to court. We took the Office of Fair Trading to court with the wonderful Phil Michaels, who was the legal lead at Friends of the Earth at the time, who was brilliant. And he's much missed because he's passed away from us now. But he took the government to court. We took it to court for not investigating the grocery sector. So how it was, what it was demanding of farmers was affecting consumers. And we also said affecting the environment, but obviously competition policies, largely around consumers. To cut a very long story short, we won that case. We got the Groceries Code Adjudicator to act, which was set up in 2008, came into fall - Well, started to be set up - Sorry. The research was done by the Competition Commission. Huge document, enormous document which led to the creation of the Groceries Code Adjudicator, which enforces a set of codes on the supply chain so it can treat farmers better. And the logic being that if we treat farmers better, they will treat the land, nature, animals, workers and themselves better. And that's a very, very, hard process to actually get people to recognize, get it to import. And it was brilliant that Friends of the Earth did, it's brilliant. We had a large coalition of well, some farming, not the NFU, the NFU oppose this. They wanted voluntary codes with their Sainsbury's and their Tesco, but after a while they came round to our idea because their voluntary codes don't work.

And that's a thread in my work. Voluntary doesn't work. I'm sorry, that's the golden thread. I've seen it fail so many times, over and over again, tackling these things. If it ain't in the law, this is what I'm famous for saying, if it ain't in the act, I'm not interested. And so - I should stop now but, you know, we realize that supermarkets were not enough to be controlled. It was everything in-between. Because a lot of farmers weren't selling direct to supermarkets, and the grocery code didn't tackle that. So when Brexit happened, we took the opportunity, when I was now at Sustain, to do a lot of lobbying to change the Agriculture Act that was being developed, the agriculture bills that were being developed, to have a clause on fair dealing for the rest of the supply chain, because without that, you've only got part of the picture tackled and farmers were still being squeezed, asked for, you know, ridiculous demands. So it was impossible for them to treat the environment properly.

So that process of tackling supply chains really important, alongside having agri-environment schemes, alongside having a basis of regulation, I still think we haven't got that balance right, but it started to grow. And now the Wildlife Trusts, I'm trying to get more interest from the environmental organization to the supply chain, the food system itself, and regulation of that so it treats farmed environment, which is 70% of land, better. Is that alright? Sorry I *[inaud].

[00:29:23]

Saskia Papadakis: *Thank you so much, Vicki. Yeah, I'd like to invite Areeba now for your contribution?*

[00:29:27]

Areeba Hamid:: Thanks very much. Good afternoon, everybody. Forgive me for being late, or at least I hope you've forgiven me for my *[inaud]. When I was mulling over this question, I thought maybe I'll speak about three examples that might actually demonstrate how policy work has evolved during that time, 1970 to 2020. I should say the first example is before my time. I mean, don't ask me any questions about the first example, that's a decade too early since I started thinking about even working. But I think one example that stands out that Greenpeace along with other organizations worked on was, and I find this incredible to talk about right now, is a partnership with Coca Cola that Greenpeace did, because Coca Cola agreed to put CFC-free gases in its refrigeration.

Now, this was the heady times when the biggest problem was a hole in the ozone layer which was very, very - That was a big problem. Much, much more innocent times. And from what I hear and what I've read about this case study, Greenpeace and Coca Cola joined hands and actually did, what at that time the word didn't exist, but a version of a hackathon of engineers where they invited ideas to invent refrigeration which would be CFC free. And it worked. And then in a partnership at multilateral body, Greenpeace and Coca Cola share the dais and actually publicize this technology. And all the fridges then followed, not just Coke. Every soft drink industry followed the suit and it became policy. And sometimes companies like to talk about how when you work on corporations, it translates into policy, and I think there was a golden period of that when that happened. And more and more as you see the world right now, the less and less it seems feasible, and I really agree with Vicki that voluntary commitments are a very slippery slope. They are usually, that road usually leads to disappointment.

And I'm going to talk a little bit more about that in the work that happened on forest conservation across the world, which is one of the most global pieces of work that Greenpeace

and other organizations have worked on. In particular, commodities like palm oil and pulp and paper coming from Indonesia and leading to deforestation there. And again, some of the some of the examples there are what Vicky was speaking to, which is mapping the supply chains, having really good collaborations with communities on the ground, exposing how supply chains are linked to deforestation, bringing that in front of the consumers in the UK, in markets like UK and Europe, linking that to big FMCG brands like Procter and Gamble or like, Cadbury's or Nestlé, famously, and then creating a scandal about it, which would then push the company to drop that particular supplier from the supply chain, which would have a direct impact on no deforestation on the ground back in Indonesia. That worked like a treat for a few years between late '90s and early 2000s. I would say that every single FMCG, at least in the UK or EU was targeted by this corporate campaigning and it worked really, really well. There were some bursts of creativity during that. There was the famous ad that a person eating a KitKat finger, it turned slowly into an orangutan finger. And Nestlé got so angry that it banned the ad, which is the formula for making the ad famous. So more people watch the ad and they try to take us to court, but then they couldn't because we weren't using their brand for profit, and it has many, many stories like that. And that became sort of the touchstone of successful corporate campaigning that actually turned into policy.

At that time, I was working quite closely with lots of corporations in UK, but also with our colleagues in Indonesia and doing this whole supply chain thing. And I remember in 2015, every company committed to having no deforestation commitments by 2020, in the supply chains. 2020 has come and gone and they have done diddly squat about it. And that was, you know, even then, I think we should have been wise unto the fact that unless regulation comes in and regulates these corporations, they are going to go back on their commitments. They are, they think it's a problem for the next generation, they think it's a problem for the next guy. They're not going to do it. 2015 to 2020 must have felt really long to them. I remember having furious conversations back at the office thinking, "maybe we should have not said five years, we should have said 2023. Maybe five years is too long a timeline". And they all pleaded how complex the supply chains are and we can't really do it. We need five years to map the suppliers to make sure that we are actually treating them fairly, to make sure where our commodities come from. Many of them didn't even know where commodities come from.

So that evidence base and investigation, that sort of thorough mapping of things on the ground and facts on the ground will always, always remain a part of policymaking, whether it's government or corporations. That's the reason they listen to you. But I do think that we have

reached a point in 2020 when it just became quite clear that policy, unless it comes from government with punitive impacts, if it's not adhered to, is not going to work at all. And we've seen that with banks, we've seen that with oil and gas companies, you know, we've just seen BP this week hot on the heels of carbon budget, double down on oil and gas, voluntary commitments don't work. And the more and more we can translate the policy to government regulation, the more we will see the results actually drive themselves.

And the third example I wanted to take was actually about London and another campaign that I worked on - the ultra-low emission zone. Which a lot of people will still describe as something that is controversial, but the truth is that it's out there, it's working, it has been expanded. And it was a result of a lot of campaigning by a lot of groups. Healthy Air Coalition, which is a large coalition of parents, of doctors, of policy makers, of local councilors, sustainable transport campaigners like London Cycling Network or Sustainable Transport network. They were part of it, and Greenpeace was quite late to that coalition, we joined it quite late. But I remember Sadiq Khan was up for election, he was running against Zac Goldsmith at that time. This was his first term in 2015. And ClientEarth had already sued the UK government for failing on its commitments to have a healthy air in terms of nitrogen dioxide in the air and particulate matter. And we joined that coalition. And, if you were around at that time, you would recall that we put a giant mask on Nelson's Column, which was sort of the launch of the campaign. Which, for me, remains one of the enduring sort of photos of if Nelson was alive and breathing right now, he would be breathing polluted air and that sort of, that sort of direct action pushed that conversation more in front of policymakers. And before the elections, we worked with constituents. We went to, what are they called when they answer questions before elections? Hustings! Hustings. You only remember that word during elections, not before or after that. We went to hustings. We wrote to all these, including the Green Party and the Lib Dems, and they all committed to some form of an ultra-low emission zone before the elections. So we knew that this was coming. We knew that no matter who becomes the mayor, there's going to be some sort of policy.

But it was already quite controversial as to what it would mean. How much would it judge people? What will happen to people with older vehicles? What will happen to diesel cars? People were already making noises about, wasn't it green campaigners who said diesel cars are better than petrol cars? And how could you ask us to phase them out? But I think it was consistent campaigning and consistent showing that the mandate for clean air existed. And, in fact, I did some work with doctors at the Royal University Hospital in London who formed the offshoot

group called Doctors Against Diesel, which I think became one of those groups that was really pivotal at that time, who were just talking about the health impacts of air pollution, because ultimately that's what mattered. What mattered was that it is one of the greatest cities in the world, and we should be able to breathe clean air. We shouldn't be actually breathing dirty air, which is worse than most of the cities in Europe, which was the basis of ClientEarth's lawsuit. And by this time, ClientEarth had sued the UK government thrice and won in courts. And when the ultra-low emission zone was introduced, there was controversy. And I remember again, we engaged lots and lots of people across London to respond to the consultation that the Mayor of London put out, and that was one way of showing, making that mandate visible, because there was a lot of noise in the press, especially the rightwing press, that this is going to go down quite badly and people are going to revolt. And the white van man well, the truth is, the white van man is probably the worst affected by the air pollution that's coming out of his van, and we continuously made that point.

And then again, two years before, two years ago, when the mayor wanted to expand the ultra-low emission zone, we heard that noise again. In fact, this was, I think, Susan Hall, who was the Tory party candidate for the mayor, this year ran on undoing the ultra-low emission zone. We've seen the controversy in Uxbridge which actually amounted to nothing. Turns out people actually are complying by the ultra-low emission zone. It is a policy. It's been now nearly ten years. It has cut down, within its first two years, it had cut down harmful emissions by 30% in London.

So I'm a big fan of using all kinds of campaigning that you can, especially showing the mandate, whether it's consumers or from voters, what they want, whether it's through consultations or asking them to engage in making consultations simpler for them to engage in. Sometimes the consultations tend to be so opaque and technical that I think one of the things that we did was just translate them into regular questions that are person could answer if they lived in a council. And that to me, is the secret sauce to really making policy successful. Because if you can show again and again that this is what the impacted people want, this is what the experts want, this is this is evidence based, yes, but also popular or is going to be popular despite what the noise around it might be. That can translate into policy and make things different. And yeah, I mean, we can talk about voluntary commitments and backsliding on DEI to net zero till the cows come home, and the scary world of Trump, but I can leave that for now.

[00:40:18]

Saskia Papadakis: *Thank you so much, Areeba. *[inaud] I'm quite sure Shaun's *[inaud].*

[00:40:23]

Shaun Spiers: Great. Thanks very much. And I'm so pleased to hear that Vicki can't remember the name of the organization she ran because as we're all racking our brains to remember this history, that's really reassuring. So I've been around less time than a lot of people. I started at CPRE in 2004, but actually, I was on the European Parliament Agricultural Committee during the Fischler reforms, stirring up apathy about agricultural reform. I was going to try and briefly touch on five points.

Firstly, what do we mean by the environment? And that, in my time, has kind of ebbed and flowed. There is a mysterious sounding grouping called the White Paper Dinner, which I think Tom set up. This sort of Soviet sounding name in 1990, which is meeting the chief executives of the main environmental groups. And when I joined that, it was kind of almost all about climate. And there was some frustration from that's where the government's interest was, and that seemed to be where the politics was. Stephen I hope you agree with that. Leading up to the 2010 election, as a change of government came to seem likely, there was a sort of pivot to talking about nature, and nature was underestimated. We need to talk about nature.

Nature, of course, in terms of the mass membership environmental NGOs, they are nature NGOs, the ones with millions of members, and I think now that is still sort of where their energy is. And I think the gap is probably on serious climate policy, which E3G does, but it's not a mass membership organization like some other organizations, there's a sort of gap there. Place and beauty, which might have been where the old environmental movement was coming from or what was sort of considered in 1970 has always been slightly peripheral. I felt that very much when I was running CPRE, it wasn't particularly peripheral in that way in the White Paper Dinner because there were few planners on it, and Stephen and Fiona Reynolds. But the places people care about and identify with have been relatively peripheral to the main concerns and policy concerns of the environmental NGOs, and I think that has been a weakness.

Secondly, just in terms of how important is policy, I think sort of ebbs and flows about whether the important thing is getting the politics right or the important thing is *[inaud, burrowing?] away on detailed policies. And sometimes, of course, the two could align, and you get a government that actually wants to make some serious progress on environmental policy, and then to have ready the policies that they can implement, is great. At other times, you are scratching around to work with isolated ministers or a few civil servants, and the machine keeps going, but the energy of the government is elsewhere. And in terms of policy, I suppose the

worry is everything's kind of sped up and dumbed down and we've got a big change in post-Brexit. There was a time when a lot of environmental policy was decided in the European Union. For most of this period, it was decided on a five-year timescale by a commission that had five years with Parliament, with a five-year term overseeing it. And there's just been kind of incredible turnover in UK environmental policies since Brexit, much more of a short term, short time span. So, since the Brexit referendum, it's slightly unfair to say, but since the June 2016 Brexit referendum, there have been 9 Environment Secretaries and 9 Secretaries of State responsible for energy. That leaves us slightly rudderless in terms of who we're influencing and the changes of political direction. And obviously, you need to get the politics right to land the policy.

Thirdly, who is influencing the policy? In my time, there's been some fantastic work by NGOs on policy. I would say, and this particularly applies to the area of planning and land use, the running has been made by what George Monbiot always calls the "dark money think tanks". The IEA, the Adam Smith Institute, Policy Exchange, etc. have been much more influential than environmental NGOs, for all the environmental NGO membership. And that has sort of reached its peak now with the Chancellor and the Prime Minister basically rabbiting IEA and Adam Smith Institute talking points on planning and policy. And I think that leaves us as a sector wondering quite where we are.

The fourth thing is, I think the focus of our policy work, understandably, is on the departments that are directly responsible for the environment. But the departments that are directly responsible for the environment are often quite weak. So Defra, although actually it should be quite a central department now and quite a senior department, having had all the agricultural fisheries and environmental policies repatriated from the European Union, is still considered to be quite a weak department. It had its sort of moment under Michael Gove, but generally it's not got particularly senior – Steve Reed, I think perhaps counts as more senior, but it's not generally had particularly senior secretaries of state. And DESNZ, at the moment, seems relatively beleaguered. I think where we have really struggled on the whole, and I'm really interested in those who've been around longer than me, but I think the Treasury has been a really, really difficult department to get to.

Sometimes there are ways around that. I can remember when I was at CPRE, I used to meet with David Cameron's special adviser responsible for planning. He always used to sit me in the Thatcher room because he thought it was funny. And we'd sort of plot about how the Prime Minister could work against his chancellor because the backbenchers were angry about some of

their planning policies. But if the Prime Minister and the Chancellor are totally aligned and they're taking the Treasury view, then it's quite hard to get environmental arguments across in most normal times. All that's quite gloomy.

The fifth and last point I was going to make is that when a bunch of people who've been around the environment movement get together, there's no alcohol involved today, so perhaps it'll be better, but there's a tendency to get a bit gloomy, I find. But actually, if you do look at the whole period we're talking about, there have been lots and lots of really quite big wins. And I think they have kind of increased as the evidence salience of the environment has increased.

My first election when I was at CPRE was 2005. No interest at all, really hard. We used to have meetings - Green Alliance pulled together campaigns on influencing the manifesto. It was really hard to get anything in the main manifestos. 2005 all the way through the elections, the environment was almost invisible. In 2019, there was a bit of a bidding war, that was on the back of Extinction Rebellion, so a bit of a bidding war between all the main parties as to who could be the most ambitious. 2024, quite interestingly, *[inaud], I know, but there was an attempt by the Conservative Party to sort of run against the environment, and it was clearly unsuccessful, and the other parties had quite ambitious manifestos.

But of course, we've won the Climate Change Act and subsequently net zero, won the Environment Act, won new national parks. Won a big change on farming policy, which has been kind of a major preoccupation for years and years and seemed to be pushing water uphill. And although it's sort of in the balance how effective that's going to be, the principle of public money for public goods is a huge success. The downside, of course, is that we know we're not winning fast enough and everything is kind of - The ecosystem and the climate are deteriorating at a faster rate than we're able to make repairs, as it were. But I still think that we, as a movement, should dwell on some of the successes, even though I've mostly dwelt on the difficulties.

[00:48:21]

Saskia Papadakis: *Thanks so much, Shaun, for ending on a positive note. If Jeremy's okay with that, I think we'll let it run until 3:15 in 10 minutes? Okay, I'd like to open it up now to the rest of our panel, if anyone has any interventions or reflections based on what we've just heard from our speakers. Yeah, Nigel?*

[00:48:43]

Nigel Doar: Well, it's interesting, because I'm neither an expert, nor, really, a political person. So my experience is, over the years, of dipping in and out and doing all sorts of stuff on the environment for a long, long time in various different ways. The question here, how policy work has evolved, I'm looking at it and I'm thinking, "actually my experience of it is that it hasn't evolved very much". Because I think back to when I first started in the 1990s on the peat campaign, and that's still going now. And back then, what did we do? We used to write to MPs, we used to count the number of responses we got back. We used to run public events. We used to go and work within, with retail, trying to get them to promote peat-free alternatives. We went through all the stuff and it all was great. And we achieved, as Shaun's pointed out, some great things along the way, so, you know. They bought out planning permissions for the peat extraction at Thorne and Hatfield Moors, which was a brilliant step forwards. They did that at various other nationally important nature sites around the country. The market for peat-free alternatives doubled in five years, and it's now like four times bigger than the whole peat market was back in 1990.

And yet, all through the years we, you know, we did all those things, and we thought we'd been very successful. And we now, the team at RSWT, are now facilitating virtually the same process again now, to get retailers to stop using peat. We're still banging on about getting the government to ban it in horticulture, which, you know. And the mechanisms you use are all virtually the same. And it might all be digitized now, and it might all be much faster now than it was, but it's all very, very similar. And for a wildlife trust, our strength is grass roots. People in real places getting out there and talking to their contacts and and bringing that into the political debate. They do that very similarly now, except we do it more proactively.

[00:50:56]

Shaun Spiers: Can I just say one thing that's changed, by the way, for most policies is devolution. That's the other thing I meant to say, is that we've now got four governments, but that's *[inaud].

[00:51:06]

Tom Burke: There's something else that's changed, actually.

[00:51:09]

Saskia Papadakis: *Sorry, this is Tom.*

[00:51:09]

Tom Burke: Tom, yes. Something else that's changed, and Shaun, you play a central part in it. Throughout the whole of the period I've been involved until the last ten years, there was no policy institute for the environment at all. And you've turned the Green Alliance into a policy institute. I think that's been a very important addition to the policy capabilities of the environment community. And I think we shouldn't overlook that. I think things have changed. We haven't won the battles, but things have changed quite a lot. And I think it's partly - what we've not done is understand the difference in policy and politics. Policy is a route map. It just tells you how you've got to get to wherever it is you think you ought to be instead of here. Politics is the journey. It's how you get you, and everybody has to go with you, to arrive at the destination. I think, for far too long, we've tended to kind of assume that if you just kept repeating your policy prescriptions, it would change the politics. And it doesn't. Which is why you find yourself where you are now.

[00:52:11]

Vicki Hird: That's why Gove was the most important political thing that happened for the agri-environment schemes. It was a moment in time where we had the right guy in the right place to get the outcome.

[00:52:53]

Areeba Hamid:: I think, (Areeba), I think a Freedom of Information Act coming in definitely changed campaigning and policymaking. That was a pivotal moment as a campaigner, to be able to get information from the government and then make policy recommendations. I mean, maybe it relates more to politics because it's that scandal and investigation element, which I think has moved. Sometimes policy jumps in ways that was not possible before.

[00:52:50]

Fiona Harvey: And has changed journalism and the way that we are able to write and inform the public about what's happening in policymaking.

[00:52:56]

Saskia Papadakis: *So that was Fiona.*

[00:52:57]

Tom Burke: We can't hear you, Fiona.

[00:52:58]

Fiona Harvey: Oh, sorry.

[00:52:59]

Tom Burke: No, no, no, you need to speak loudly because I could hardly hear you.

[00:53:03]

Fiona Harvey: *(Louder)* Sorry.

[00:53:05]

Saskia Papadakis: *Sorry, Nigel Haigh.*

[00:53:06]

Nigel Haigh: Well, the timescale is 1970 to 2020, and undoubtedly environmental policy has changed in that 50-year period. I mean, if you simply take the the timescale between 1970 to 1990, external events have changed it. The discovery of the hole in the ozone layer focused the minds of everybody around the world on a global issue. It was quite by coincidence that that happened before climate change became the big issue. Because the Ozone Layer Convention gave people courage that governments, collectively, can adopt a policy to eliminate CFCs and thus begin the repairing of the hole in the ozone layer. And that gave people courage that there was a possibility of having an international convention on climate change, but none of that was thought about at all in 1970. There was a huge change in those 20 years, and there've been other changes since.

[00:54:23]

Saskia Papadakis: *Have I got anything from the other side of the room here? Any - Jonathon Porritt?*

[00:24:28]

Jonathon Poritt: I have a question, actually, for Shaun. I'm interested in this analysis that at different points, DOE, Department of the Environment, or Defra, has been either deemed to be successful and influential within the government and at other points has been seen to be completely ineffectual and the kind of place where nobody, no self-respecting politician would want to go. I'm amazed that anybody mentions Michael Gove, by the way, as a successful Secretary of State. Anybody who does that clearly is in the wrong meeting. But one might have mentioned, David Miliband, which is a different story. But what – the question I'm asking, we're going to move on to the Labour and Conservative administrations in the next session, but is there any analysis done of how changes in government departmental policy, sort of, narratives has affected outcomes for the environment? Do you know of a body of work going back to 1970 that shows how different approaches taken by government, at different times, through different departmental mechanisms, has had a clear impact on what has happened in the environment?

[00:55:37]

Shaun Spiers: I don't know of a body work like that. Nigel might. Yeah., so I just want to say, just very quickly, aside from the mechanisms, I think in my experience, the impact of individuals has been huge. If you are an individual who's good at managing government or wants to do the right thing or can drive progress, then, as David Miliband did, as Hilary Benn did in the short time he was there, and actually, as Michael Gove did, it makes a difference. So, Nigel.

[00:56:06]

Nigel Haigh: Well, have people studied this? No, they haven't, not to my knowledge. And as a general point, academics seem not to have been interested in studying in the evolution of environmental policy. I mean, for example, in 1995, when John Gummer was Secretary of State for the Environment, he decided to have a party, a big conference to celebrate 25 years of the DOE. So 1970 to 1995. And they convened a massive conference in the Queen Elizabeth Hall. They commissioned five different people to write reports on urban policy, planning policy, inner-city regeneration and one on environmental protection. Four of those reports were written by academics. They had to find somebody to write the an account of what the DOE had done in 25 years. Who did they choose? They chose me, I'm not an academic. Because they knew that I had studied it. And of course there are lots of different subjects - water, waste, air, nature, noise, climate change and very few people have studied all of those. I happened to have done so. So I was able to write - I was given a small sum of money and in two and a half days I wrote a report and it's published. So that is the only account of the evolution of policy in the Department of

Environment. I find that astonishing, and I challenge the academic community to get its act together and focus on the environment as a subject for study. So the work that is being done for this oral history could be a stimulant to that. So I encourage you to push academics to study this interesting subject.

[00:58:01]

Saskia Papadakis: *I think I can confirm that some people in the audience are studying it, so it's already happening, I promise. We've got one last intervention from Tom, but then I think we'll have to…*

[00:58:11]

Tom Burke: Thank you. I think John raised really, actually, a question that I think is even wider, which is – And Nigel's answer was correct, I don't think anybody's made any kind of study. My particular focus on this comes from having worked with John Gummer in the Department of the Environment, which was powerful because it ran local government finance. It wasn't powerful because of what it did on the environment, it was powerful because Gummer, who was always being touted in the headlines as up for a sack, actually knew he was absolutely confident because he had the ear of every single party chairman around the country. I mean, so he knew exactly how he was and he wasn't going to get sacked.

And it was a real weakening of the institutional types of the environment when planning was separated and it was put in with agriculture, which was a department that, all over all my time I've been around and involved in government, has always been a bad department. And certainly, connecting it to the environment didn't make it a better department, it just diminished the environment's clout. And I don't think we, as a community, have addressed institutional questions in that sort of way. We have not actually sought, "what are the institutions that should deliver for us?" and think about it. And particularly, one of the things we haven't done is also to address methodological questions. So the Treasury has the kind of power it has because frankly, a lot of its theoretical stuff is garbage that we never challenge. The idea that you could do a cost/benefit analysis with unbounded sets, and that can give you a useful answer, is just theoretical rubbish. But we don't challenge it. And I think, so there are some failings, I think, on our part for not understanding how government processes actually work.

[00:59:58]

Saskia Papadakis: *And on that note, I'd like to thank all of our panelists.*

**(applause)*

So, we'll have a short break of five minutes. And - five minutes, then everyone back in their seats within good time for our next session. So please help yourself to hot drinks and, biscuits and things.

[01:00:31]

End of track one.

Session 2: How has policy work developed under Labour and Conservative administrations?

Shaun Spiers: Okay, let's start the next session. It's on how is policy work developed under Labour and Conservative administrations? I've told all the speakers that we're going to have sort of three or four minute introductions and then we'll have a wide ranging panel discussion. So the first speaker is Tom Burke whose CV is far too long to read out. Tom.

Tom Burke: I'm not going to use the mic because by and large I have found that people can normally hear when I speak.

Shaun Spiers: *Tom you need to use the mic for the camera.*

[00:00:35]

Tom Burke: Okay. Well I'll do whatever you tell me to do. I'm quite obedient. Okay. Shaun earlier in the previous panel made a reference to the White Paper dinners. The White Paper dinners came about because the Green Alliance kind of realised that the only people politicians really listened to are other politicians. And so if you wanted to get their attention, then you have to go way back to the, really the seventies, late seventies when you can't imagine how little attention the environment got. Anyway, the idea was that we should stimulate a series of, we set up a series of speeches made by kind of prominent figures. David Owen was one, Michael Heseltine was another, David Steel was another, just to create this idea that it was a competition between political leaders to capture as it were the green flag. Now what gave that some impetus was the fact coincidentally the Greens had done, got 15% for the first time ever in the European elections and that had woken everybody up. So there was a moment when you could do that. And that was, what that led to was actually as far as I can tell, and I'm going to get Jonathon's wrath because I'm going to mention a name he told us not to mention in a minute, but actually, actually Chris Patten created *Our Common Inheritance* as a White Paper on environment policy. There had been previously one white paper on environmental pollution I think by a Labour Lord. But the first ever statement of white, overall environment policy was a Tory Party statement put together by Chris Patten partly out of that competition. He was very alert to it. There has not been anything other like that out of a political party till Gove came up with what was not a complete white paper on the environment, what was at least was a form of Government policy statement. And it's the most extraordinary and revealing thing that Labour has never had one, has never felt a need to respond. And that tells me

something very important about what's actually happened on politics here. There is no conversation inside the political parties. And the idea that the *Telegraph* runs, that somehow all these people who care about climate are a bunch of left wing eco nuts is kind of a fantasy because the only, it's only right wing parties that have managed to put together to comprehensive statements on the environment. So they're clearly not reading their own literature. We founded E3G in the beginning of this century because we figured out the environmental NGOs were doing a pretty good job on policy but they really weren't doing a great job on politics. And what the NGOs had done in particular was to raise awareness to an extraordinary extent. And that raising of awareness had taken place when I started in the seventies with working with Friends of the Earth. There might have been a couple of hundred environmental professionals in the United Kingdom. By the time we're thinking about creating E3G there are probably several thousand environmental professionals working in the City of London alone. And that was a change we never seemed to recognise ourselves that we've created this massive community, hence the name E3G for third generation environmentalism. So we are still punching- We thought we were punching below our weight and we're still punching below our weight. And in a sense that marker, the fact that Labour have never thought it necessary to put together a comprehensive statement of their environment policy tells you how much we're still punching below our weight.

Shaun Spiers: *Great. Thanks Tom. I'm going to shift the order and go next to Harriet, okay because you've got to slip away early.*

[00:04:35]

Harriet Lamb: Thank you so much. And I want to come at this from two angles. And the first one is just to note that of course the environmental movement has also worked so much with the development, international development movement. And that we mustn't forget that the things that the two movements have worked on. And one of them I want to mention in particular is going back to 1994 which is the Pergau Dam case, which I was at that point at the World Development Movement, now called Global Justice Now. And we campaigned for more and better aid through our groups throughout the country and our members. And that included the better aid, included making sure that aid was supporting good environmental actions not undermining it. And Friends of the Earth who've come up a lot today, the impact of all their actions, Friends of the Earth were putting the finger on Pergau Dam and saying aid should not be used to build the Pergau Dam in Malaysia. And we at the World Development Movement were absolutely convinced that aid was being used as a sweetener for an arms deal, we wanted to sell

weapons to the Malaysian Government. And so we took environmental- We took, we tabled questions in Parliament, we had an inquiry, all the different tactics that all of us can try to use to get the spotlight on an issue. And finally we at WDM took the Thatcher Government to court. It was a judicial review. We staked the house on it because undoubtedly if we'd lost that would have been the end of WDM. Of course the membership rallied behind us, thought it was the most exciting thing we'd ever done. And we were proved right, that indeed the Aid Department at that time had not wanted to back Pergau Dam but had been overruled by both the Permanent Secretary and the Minister had been overruled by the Thatcher Government. We won the case and that was absolutely instrumental in helping lead under a Labour Government to the starting of the ending of the aid for trade provision as it was, which was misusing aid as a sweetener for commercial deals. And it contributed to the founding of the Department for International Development. And then later a huge campaign by many of the environmental and all the development agencies for 0.7%. And that was enacted under Labour but in fact we reached that 0.7% of our national income going to aid under a Conservative Government. And I wanted to tell this story this week because this week under a Labour Government, we have torn up that commitment. And I think it also points to the fact you have to keep campaigning. The minute you stop putting your spotlight on an issue and pressing for it, it slips down the political agenda. And aid has been slipping down the agenda for years from that high point when people filled the streets to call to Make Poverty History.

The second example I would like to give also starts with Friends of the Earth which, when they were founded I think in about 1973 in the UK, and one of the first things they did was to dump a load of plastic bottles on Schweppes's headquarters in London as at that time Schweppes were moving from glass, returnable glass to plastic bottles. And that was part of a huge campaign to say, to firstly to try to stop companies doing it, that didn't succeed clearly. But then to try to make sure that we had the infrastructure in place to collect and recycle bottles and then gradually to move away from it. And that's when WRAP where I work now, which is the Waste and Resources Action Programme, was established under a Labour Government in the year 2000 which an Act of Parliament to say that we had to address what we were going to do about, at that point in particular was about landfill, because we absolutely needed to make sure, we were full basically. And I think that was quite interesting to have an NGO established by an Act of Parliament is quite unusual. And we have then gone on to provide policy, to do the research and provide the policy that can help inform the shifts we want to make. And I think it's really interesting if you look at Wales which was mentioned before, Wales has just led the way. And that is partly probably having that

greater consistency of Government. And if you look at the, you know, they are the second best country in the world for recycling because they've just given it that long term serious commitment and attention. And I would think because they have the Wellbeing of Future Generations Action, which is such a landmark piece of legislation in terms of ensuring you put that lens on every policy that you look at. So I think there's really interesting learning from there. And they've always been very committed as a Government to working with local authorities and with the public. They have never stepped back from working with the public in order to drive some of the changes we need to see. And I guess just to give another example if I have time, or shall I shut up?

Shaun Spiers: *One minute.*

[00:10:19]

Harriet Lamb: One minute, okay, fine- is on food waste which again goes back to always, we need as an environmental movement to be also always looking at the social implications. And actually the Government at the time in about 2007 was worried about the amount of food that was going into black bins. And WRAP said, no we need to work on this in a way that is addressing the fact that people are actually, people could save money if less food was wasted. That it actually has a social gain as well. And always putting that social angle has I think been really important to driving some of the changes that we've seen and incredible progress in particular in the beginning in seeking to prevent food waste. And that has commanded cross-party support. I think it is really interesting to see that all through different Government regimes they have stood by the importance of tackling food waste. Whereas we know something like simpler recycling which WRAP provided the evidence for back in 2016, which just shows how long policy takes to change, of course that then ran into the *Daily Mail* seven bins headline. And that of course then scares the politicians and they lose their nerve, and that was under a Conservative Government, completely lost its nerve of seeing through a policy which actually would have helped reduce waste. But that sort of, they've pulled back from that because of the right wing press.

Shaun Spiers: *Lovely. Thanks very much Harriet. And now, am I meant to introduce people properly am I, I think? Well Nigel Doar, Director of Policy and Research, Wildlife Trust.*

[00:12:11]

Nigel Doar: Thank you Shaun. I'll be very simple again. I have always looked at this, I'm not quite sure what the question is getting at, whether we should be highlighting differences between Labour and Conservative or not, but looking at it simplistically, I have always thought this is all far too important to be party political, so I have totally ignored that. But there are definitely distinct differences between the parties in the way they approach stuff. I'll start with similarities. I think it's struck me over the years that pretty much every Government, any bit of sort of certainly natural environmental legislation has been introduced with something else that they thought was kind of interesting and important and bolted onto it, rather than just as a straight piece of nature legislation. So the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, obviously the Labour Party was very, very keen on the open access to the countryside bit of it. And, oh yeah they've got to do some nature stuff as well. And similarly with the Marine and Coastal Access Act, a lot of enthusiasm for the coastal access bit, and so on. So that's one thing. Another thing, I think there's quite often across both parties an effort to try to do something with the environment either on the cheap or to save money or generate economic something. So I think back to campaigning in Scotland about roads, it was slightly different because of course back in the nineties it was the Scottish Office, it was part of the Westminster Government, there was no devolution. And you'd got a country which was very, very heavily Labour being governed from the south. And there was this sort of sense that they needed to spend a load of money in the north on spending money on roads to increase their economic prospects was a great thing to be doing. And so to have us campaigning against all this road building was all a bit of a pain from the Scottish Labour point of view because they wanted more investment in Scotland. But it was great for the Conservatives because actually they didn't have enough money by the time we got to the point they were starting to think this is a nightmare, we can't afford to spend money on all of these road schemes, we gave them an out. We allowed them to save money, cut the spend on the road programme in Scotland, and not piss off all the Scottish people too much because it was the environmentally right thing to do. So we didn't get an extension to the M80 motorway. We didn't get a second Forth Road Bridge. We didn't get a whole load of major road schemes that would have been environmentally trashing the place, I think largely because we enabled the Conservatives a bit of an out. Then I look at my period further south in the next decade was pretty much, that was the, what the Blair decade, Labour. Well I got the sense all the politicians I worked with, maybe it was because I was doing it in and around Sheffield mostly, but you know, you'd have meetings with people like John Healey or with David Blunkett or somebody. Their primary purpose, what they wanted out of that, what we were doing environmentally was urban regeneration that was going to be good for people. And it was, you know, they wanted to link the nature conservation agenda to urban regeneration and dealing with

inequality and health and wellbeing and all of that sort of stuff. And so we did that for them. And it was very easy to link our agenda to their agenda. And then more recently you come across people like Rebecca Powell who is an absolutely dedicated wildlife person, really up the thing, she's from the Conservative end of things, has a slightly different perspective on most of the rest of her politics. But again, you know, she was a very easy person to talk to about the sorts of things we were wanting to push when we were going through the process of getting the, you know, the local nature recovery strategies built into the Environment Act a couple of years ago.

So I think there are certainly some differences but there are an awful lot of similarities. And one of the things I was reflecting on is how different policies very often get passed over from administration to administration. And I think one period that I thought was particularly interesting was Hilary Benn, he's been mentioned earlier. We put- They had commissioned, he commissioned the National Ecosystems Assessment which was published in 2011. So he commissioned and it got published after the Labour Government had stopped being in office. He commissioned John Lawton to do his review of nature conservation designations and what the future of nature conservation in the landscape should be. And that was then picked up in the white paper by the Conservation Liberal Democrat administration in 2010. And it was almost seamless as far as I could tell. It was like actually, the Labour Party had kind of kicked all that stuff off and then it just fed straight into the Conservative and Liberal Democrat agenda, I think largely because the Liberal Democrats [incomp 00:18:03] It was, and that was a very good one. We've got a slightly contrasting thing just happened just recently where the Conservatives set the ball rolling with the wild release of beavers and then suddenly the Labour administration comes in and says, 'I don't think we want that. Let's put, we'll stop that, we don't want to reintroduce beavers, let's not.' And then of course today, hooray they've said yes we're going to have wild beaver releases after an awful lot of pushing and hassling by the Wildlife Trusts and other environmental organisations. So you know sometimes you can get joins between administrations that work really well. Sometimes you can't. And they certainly have slightly different agendas when they're coming at it.

Shaun Spiers: *Thanks Nigel. And now Stephen Joseph, Campaign for Better Transport, Transport 2000.*

[00:18:49]

Stephen Joseph: Thank you. Yes, so Stephen Joseph. I did thirty years at Campaign for Better Transport, previously Transport 2000. But my memory does go back a bit further than that when I was a volunteer campaigner in the 1970s and got quite deeply involved in the campaign against

the London motorways, the Archway Road and things like that. And just a few sort of thoughts about the kind of how is policy work developed. Well firstly things that have stayed the same, I think, so I think broad alliances have been where, bringing a lot of different people together including people, let's try this again, people outside the environmental movement have made a big difference. So, Transport 2000 is a really interesting example. And Nigel was on the board when it first started in the 1970s. But it was an alliance of conservation groups and the rail unions and bits of the rail industry. So, and the crucial bit was that the National Union of Railwaymen funded it but didn't take a leading role in it. So they left the Conservation Society and others, Civic Trust, to do the lead work on it, to be the face of it rather than it being seen as another trade union front. But it did mean it had links to the Labour Party. So I think that made a big difference. So that's an example of that. Much later on in the 1990s, in reaction to the Government's Roads for Prosperity, the biggest road programme since the Romans, we and others set up the Transport Roundtable, taken forward by the Green Alliance recently, to bring together the different conservation and environmental groups and people outside that, campaigning against the roads programme. I'd also mention that within this, we haven't mentioned this yet, but the, but the importance of working with environmental groups inside the political parties is really important. So we need to- So the SERA, Socialist Environment Resources Association, Conservative Environment Network, these have been really important as ways in. Things like the water privatisation, you know, SERA was deeply involved in bringing the unions and conservation groups together on that. So I think, so broad alliance is a big thing. Does evidence and research work? Not necessarily at the time but in my experience sometimes you do the evidence and research and at the time nobody pays any attention but then a Minister comes along later who might be interested and suddenly it's relevant. So Transport 2000 spent years working on company car taxation reform, suddenly in the early 2000s Ed Balls and Gordon Brown took an interest in it and suddenly all that work paid off. I'd say-

The other thing I would say is that with Nigel, grassroots, Nigel Doar, grassroots matter. CPRE and planning more recently, rivers and sewers, really make a difference. Roads and traffic, absolutely huge in terms of the grassroots impacts. For different places and different political parties, Lib Dems in some places, Labour in others, Tories, particularly Tories in relation to the green belt and planning, it really makes a difference. And so I think those are sort key things. Things that have changed, judicial review, absolutely huge. And, you know, there's much more of it. I mean Harriet's about some but now there's lots of it and it's very important particularly on things like roads and so on. Just a comment about what we're not good at, telling stories. So we're

vulnerable to, we shouldn't take victories for granted. Things like, so Prescott transport white paper got derailed by, apart from Tesco and the supermarkets lobbying against it, by the fuel duty protests. Later there was the petition against road pricing. The biggest petition at the time. So those things really make a difference and finding ways of countering that, of being on the front foot rather than the back foot, of having the stories to tell the *Daily Mail* as well as *The Guardian*, I think those are really important. Just a final thought, and I think where we've got to now is that actually there's now huge consensus and support. This is not America, that climate change in particular, environment in general, are important issues. They score in YouGov polls at fourth, fifth, sixth consistently, right. And yet the commentariat and the politicians, all of them with exceptions, think that the only people who care, still think that the only people who care about the environment are Waitrose shoppers in Islington. And I think, and Reform think this too. And as lots of pollsters keep saying, they're completely wrong about this. So that allows the IEA etc. to get their story across. And I think as a movement we've just got to get better at telling stories. Devolution, key point but I won't go into the detail on that. Thank you.

[00:24:47]

Shaun Spiers: *Great. Thanks. Some really interesting points there. I thought Tom your point that Labour has never brought together its policies is really interesting. I don't know if that's because you think the Conservatives are the party of the countryside and Labour don't get it. But we could explore that. Harriet's point about the alliance between environmental and development NGOs is really interesting and Stephen also talked about the importance of broad alliances. So whether we're too narrow, particularly as cost of living and so on becomes ever more important. The environment groups are huge but they are not representative, so that's an interesting issue. And also the point that Nigel raised about whether in selling policies you talk about environment or you talk about the things the Ministers are interested in and bolt the environment on. But Nigel, you were going to say something.*

[00:25:53]

Nigel Haigh: There's an assumption that environment has been bipartisan, that there is really no difference between the Conservatives and the Labour Party over the period of fifty years that we've been- I suppose that there's a, with a question mark, is that right or is that wrong? And of course there have only been two parties in power, Labour and Conservatives. However there are other parties like the Lib Dems and the Greens which we haven't yet mentioned. Tom I remember when you as Director of the Green Alliance was starting this race between the political parties to get one of them to put the environment into its manifesto, that it was the Lib Dems who won. It

was David, what's his name, it was the SDP leader? David Owen that put it in I think. So they had, and then the other parties did too. So by getting the Lib Dems to put environment in their manifesto, the other two major, the major parties had to do the same. So that was a campaign that worked. So the Lib Dems had a role, or they weren't called that then. What is the role of the Green Party today? And what is the potential role for the Reform Party in the future? Because that is one party which is absolutely clearly totally anti the environment and they might think that that's a vote winner. I would have thought that's a total vote loser.

Shaun Spiers: *Tom do you want to come back on that?*

[00:27:33]

Tom Burke: Yes, elaborate a bit more. I mean the focus, thank you, sorry, the focus was on Tories and Labour because they're the parties of Government. And remain the parties of Government at the moment. But I think the piece very strongly that's now tearing the Tory Party apart, there are, is, is the culture wars piece. Now that's an extraordinary opportunity for the Lib Dems which they ought to take but they're not so far showing any sign of taking, is to come up with some kind of general piece about that because people are a little, don't believe, certainly after the last few weeks, are not going to believe Labour. And the Tories are now torn apart. What's really interesting though in that piece is, if you actually look at the membership of, the Tories are now down to 120, 130 something MPs, forty of them, forty or fifty of them are members of the Conservative Environment Network. I mean, so, so there's clear a sense now or opportunity. So the situation I was describing was pretty much what's dominated for I should think forty of the last fifty years. And I think that's now in flux. I think the emergence of a culture war that I mentioned has really caused problems for us because I don't think we have anything to say in response to that. And I really would like to hear from the nature groups something about the kind of nationalist- Somebody mentioned a little bit earlier in this conversation about kind of en passant, just about how the British public is deeply into all of this stuff. There are more members of the big box NGOs, or NGOs generally in Britain. There are more members of the RSBP than of all the political parties in Britain. We are enormously punching below our weight in terms of that, people get away all the time with saying, politicians left and right, get away with saying, we speak for the people and Britain. And Richard Tice and people are doing that too and they don't speak for the British people but where is the challenge coming from? That's why I made the remark about neither the Tories nor the Labour have really actually got an internal conversation about it because they are missing a really big opportunity.

Shaun Spiers: Joanna.

[00:29:50]

Joanna Watson: Thank you. I'm finding every time I think of something intelligent to say with this amazing debate going on that somebody else says it first and that's just deeply frustrating. But I wanted to kind of reflect a little bit on just thinking about how successful environmental campaigning has always been down to context. And then something, you know, I mean I've heard some of my colleagues say in the past, 'Oh we can't do that, we tried it x.' And you think well that was then, you know, sometimes the time comes right. And I reflect about the Climate Change Act and then when Friends of the Earth started the Big Ask campaign and then we worked with a lot of environmental and development and other groups. I mean it was a huge coalition to give the [incomp 00:30:37] the sense that there was a real mandate to take action on climate change. And that is really how the Act eventually got passed. I mean we thought it was going to be a five year process. I think it took three. And that's because the Labour Government read the runes, felt they had a mandate and then adopted the Bill, because we started the work as a Private Member's Bill, we follow that on various other tactics. So that was fantastically successful, you know. It's a successful campaign because it had probably one of the biggest impacts and we're still holding people to it today. And that I think is a choice, really important to make a choice of a campaign that if you can win incrementally towards a really effective goal, it's great. But that was context, that was then and that was Labour. And when Tom was talking about the culture wars, I mean I have been reading just, you know, with horror, in fact it was in *The Guardian* about a week ago or something, where Julianne Moore the actress had written a book which happened to mention the word climate in it. And it's been banned because climate is now an ideological word in the United States. It's a bad word. It's a word that has to be taken out. It's dangerous for young minds. Now that isn't culture wars, that is kind of the worst possible slippery slope towards censorship and everything. So we are, you know, at the moment we are not doing that in our libraries thank God. And I do agree with Stephen that, you know, the great British public loves nature. But they don't necessarily get the environmental rights side of environmental campaigning which we haven't really talked about. And I worry that, you know, what happens in America is going to have impacts on the Labour Government here. This Labour Government is not acting as I fondly hoped it might when I voted for them.

[00:32:22]

Shaun Spiers: *Great. Thank you. I know Harriet wants to come in. I just, on the point about the culture war, I think it's a really, really interesting question in terms of the history not the future about where, has the environmental movement been successful to the extent it has because it's been explicitly progressive, part of the wider agenda about international development, about social justice, possibly even about peace which is going to become more and more of an issue as we ramp up defence spending. Or is it successful when it appeals to Middle England and talks to RSPB and National Trust members and avoids looking too radical? And as we sort of enter a culture war, I think some groups at least are going to have to decide on that question. But Harriet, you were going to say something totally different probably.*

[00:33:05]

Harriet Lamb: Now you've said something really profound and I don't know the answer. But well, I do absolutely believe in the critical role of the environmental sector and the smaller parties helping shape the narrative and helping create the mandate for Governments to make the big bold shifts they have to make, which can obviously including regulation or banning or taxing items that we need to see done. And I also really believe in effect in implementing change at the local level. And I did just want to put, also it would be really interesting to look at how have campaigning at local level and local authority level, where obviously you see smaller parties have more sway, and how much has that been able to effect local changes put through by local authorities? And for sure we know that that, if you go on the doorsteps, often environmental issues are some of people's biggest issues because there's nothing people care more about than is their waste being collected and what's happening to the local park. And many of those issues are really burning and they may not be- I don't know whether they would fall in your divide but I just think that's also really important that we think locally as well as nationally.

[00:34:26]

Stephen Joseph: Yes. Just on the culture wars point, firstly just to reiterate, the UK is not the US. There's lots of ways in which the things that happen in the US can't cross the Atlantic unless we suddenly have a huge evangelical Christian movement appear here because there are things about the US and US politics that simply don't translate here. And that's why I said that I thought Reform and parts of the Tory Party are simply wrong about being able to just translate easily a sort of opposition to action on climate change, destruction of nature, it just doesn't translate here. I mean there are ways in which it can but so what I do think, I said about telling stories, I think it's about voices as well. So one of the things I currently do, I Chair a grant making Trust called The

Foundation for Integrated Transport. And one of the things we've been doing is funding groups in flashpoint places like Oxford and Cambridge and Wales to say, actually it might be quite a good idea if traffic went slower or there was less traffic in Oxford rather than more of it. So Oxford Delivering Liveable Streets, Cambridge Sustainable Travel Alliance, 20 Is Plenty in Wales, just to make it respectable so that, for people to think, oh actually I'm not alone. And in Oxford we've certainly heard that in Oxford and Cambridge, that's been really important just having formal voices for people who say, actually, you know, who are alliances that say that that's important, that environmental issues are important. Because otherwise people just think that it's only Jordan Peterson who was shouting about 15 minute neighbourhoods in Oxford, or similar characters, but that's everybody. And so I think that's really important, finding ways through the culture wars stuff. But finding voices in the other direction I think will be really important.

[00:36:38]

Shaun Spiers: *Thanks. Nigel, Fiona and Areeba have all indicated.*

Nigel Doar: On the culture wars thing, I think your question Shaun about whether the sector has to deal with it or not, I think actually one of the strengths is how breadth, you know. I mean some organisations might want to go one way or another and change slightly. But actually as somebody who has always worked for an environmental organisation that has often been seen as one of the slightly lightweight nice organisations that gets on with everybody, actually that has been brilliant because, you know, again going back to the road campaigning stuff up in Scotland, you know, we used to go and talk the Government Ministers about what was wrong with their road programme because they would talk to us. And at the same time the people from Earth First would be out nailing the trees and climbing up and you know- And we would talk to them behind the scenes but you know it was brilliant, you know. So and I think we have that breadth and I think that's a good thing. And we might, some of us are working very hard to increase our ethnic diversity and increase the completely the diversity of people we connect with and so on. But a lot of the work we've done recently is sort of saying, well actually, if you just go into communities and you talk to people, you know, it's actually relatively straightforward because the environment is something that everyone shares. And most people value it whether they're farmers or steelworkers or whoever they are. So I think some of the points to be made about the environment movement building on its roots and doing more stuff at a community level is actually quite a strong way of tackling all of that.

[00:38:27]

Shaun Spiers: *Great. Areeba do you want to come back on that? And then I'll pass the microphone this way.*

Areeba Hamid: Yes, I think that there is something that this question of are we successful because we are, because of the breadth and some of that is non-political and non-radical. And that's why we appeal to a mass of people. Or is now the time to actually flex some muscle to Tom's point. Because I think the only time RSPB actually threatened a strike, not a strike but a march was when Liz Truss was going to tear up the Environmental Regulation Act. That was the only time Becky Speight told *The Guardian*, 'I'm going to ask millions of people on the streets.' Are we at that point again? Perhaps, because that consensus, cross-party consensus is breaking down and it could appear that is a race to the bottom. So I often think that yes, I think we need RSPB and the Wildlife Trust, it's almost a gateway drug to make, take people to take action, more political action, because they are seen as, you know, hug a husky, more fluffy. I think there is room for all of us. But I think we need to recognise those points where it's important to also flex that power. And I think we might be reaching that point in the UK.

[00:39:47

Shaun Spiers: *Jonathon I can see your hand up and I will that back in. On the history when have been broad or more radical, when has that helped or worked best? Or maybe you were going to say something totally different.*

Jonathon Porritt: I was going to say something-

Shaun Spiers: *Say something totally different, that's fine.*

Jonathon Porritt: Thank you very much. I'm struck by the story about Labour and Conservative administrations and why they are different and why they share many things in common. I think we do have to mention though a huge turning point in 2010 and the impact of austerity and what that did from the point of view of an enabling Government at both the national, the regional, and the local level. We forget there was a pretty active dynamic tier of Government up until 2010 at the regional level which was really beginning to flex its muscles and make stuff happen. And we also forget of course that by 1998 more than 90% of local authorities had designated Local Agenda 21 campaigns, with designated Local Agenda 21 teams working effectively with voluntary organisations and community groups throughout those areas. All gone.

And because of the gradual attrition against any of that stuff now at the local level, it's so much harder for local authorities to play that empowering, enabling role. And I think however good the policy might be up here, if you haven't got that delivery, set of delivery mechanisms cross sector, very hard to get the outcomes we need.

[00:41:34]

Shaun Spiers: *Great. I think I promised Fiona [incomp 00:41:38]*

Fiona Harvey: Thanks very much. I just wanted to just say something quickly about Conservatives between 1997 and 2006. Because there were pressures on them to become kind of sceptic. And there was Lord Lawson, Nigel Lawson, and they were sort of geared up during that time to try and sort be pan-scepticism I think. And, but there were a succession of leaders who to some degree got these issues. William Hague [incomp 00:42:12] as foreign secretary [incomp 00:42:14] the Cabinet, there was Michael Howard who had been environment secretary and he understood some of these issues. And then of course, you know, when David Cameron came in, it was very significant that when he trying to detoxify the Tory brand, the thing that he chose to do, the most eye catching thing he chose to do was to go and hug a husky and to make climate a kind of a, a really big thing. So but that shows how central this was in a lot of ways to Tory thinking while they were in opposition. And they sort of did resist that culture war temptation. Then so of course in 2015 David Cameron sort of [incomp 00:43:01] quite markedly to start talking about cutting the green crap. He got in rules that they ban onshore wind farms and so on. And that's clearly in response to the threat from Nigel Farage because something that Nigel Farage just kept saying, if you look at Nigel Farage's speeches in those years, he would always touch on three things, one is the immigration obviously, Europe obviously, and, but the third thing he would always say was wind farms. He'd always have a go at wind farms. And so then we get David Cameron coming and making this big thing about wind farms. And the Conservatives at that point sort of trying to ride two horses because they're trying to combat Farage by this anti-wind farm rhetoric. But on the other hand, going off to Paris and leading the EU negotiations to get the Paris Agreement. We have Pete Betts, a fantastic civil servant and negotiator, he was the lead negotiator for the EU at Paris who really put through the Paris Agreement in 2015. So, you know, there was that kind of duality there where at home kind of reacting to the Farage rhetoric and then abroad going with the kind of broader global currents towards climate action that we saw in 2015 and the run up to it.

[00:44:31]

Shaun Spiers: *Thanks. Absolutely. Jonathon put his finger on the kind of pivotal moment really which was the recession. Because right up until then all through that previous forty, fifty years, we'd essentially been on an ascending curve of prosperity. And all of a sudden we're not on an ascending curve of prosperity. And on that ascending curve we became very good at fighting battles because we didn't have to fight a war, we'd just pick our battles and fight them wherever it happened to suit us. I think I brought culture wars up now is because it seems to me we really in a war. There are people who really want in a very serious way. And I take Stephen's point actually, what's happening in America is not a model for what's happening here, we just have our own version of it. It won't be the same as it in America but those same forces are there and they are forces of frustration with Government's inability to deliver what people want, what people would like to have. And that puts us in a very different position than we've been strategically all the way through, where we have to spend I think a bit more time thinking about the war and less time focusing on the individual battles, none of which are going to go away anyway. Harriet.*

[00:45:46]

Harriet Lamb: Well I wonder if there's two things coming out of that. One is that have we as a movement as a whole put less effort, resources, attention into building local grassroots community groups? And do we need to re-restore that aspect of our work? And I wanted to go back also to your question Shaun, I definitely think if we're going to succeed, we do need to address both the environment and social justice together. I think if we can be put and be painted into an elite green corner, that's a really dangerous place for us to be. And we need to prove that we're not there and I also think that is the best way anyway to succeed in getting mainstream support for the things that we all believe in, is by making sure we're always looking at will it create jobs, or how will it tackle inequality and in different parts of the country as well.

[00:46:43]

Stephen Joseph: Can I just make, sorry, go on, you should go. I was just going to make a very quick point which is it does seem to me, I forget who it was who said about conventional economics being completely terrible and useless and so on. But it does seem to that the current approach actually doesn't work either politically or economically. It doesn't actually address any of the things that are going on at the grassroots, you know, in terms of social justice. And it doesn't work economically either. And so I think that actually saying the Emperor's got no clothes might be quite a useful strategy going forward. Thank you.

[00:47:34]

Vicki Hird: Thanks. I did just want to make a couple of points. I'm glad Joanna mentioned the Climate Change Act and the Big Ask because that's been one of the biggest, most successful campaigns from the grassroots up. And involved a huge amount of Parliamentary campaigning by brilliant people and legal. So I'm glad you've mentioned that. I remember being very frustrated by it when I was at Friends of the Earth because everything else got second best in terms of resources and it was very annoying. But at that time, the late teens, noughts, we were also getting from Labour, and I just wanted to mention this, a really smart Cabinet level initiative to look at the food system and how it was affecting health, justice and the environment all together. And it's one of the, you know, we had food strategies before that. William Waldegrave had one, it was pretty good, when he was Secretary of State in the nineties. But this one under, actually it was Brown I suppose, was really smart because it was cross-departmental. And most of the issues we'd be talking about transport, whatever, but certainly food and farming needs to be cross-departmental. And you know whilst I agree with what you are saying about some of, the way in which departments have been created over the years, I remember when it was DETR, you know, it was transport as well. But right now we need cross-departmental on all of these issues. And that's very, very difficult. I think that's one of the things we've really failed on except with the Climate Change Act because it does, every department has to be responsible. So I just wanted to make that point. And that was very much from the grassroot.

[00:49:07]

Shaun Spiers: *I can't see anybody else indicating. Does anybody else want to come in with, yeah Jo.*

Joanna Watson: Thanks. Yes I'd just like to reflect a little bit too on when we were talking about the huge coalitions that we worked with on climate change. And everybody had- Everybody was aiming at the same goal, to get the Government to take really sensible action on climate change. But we had very different tactics, very different approaches. Some of it was, you know, because you were on the inside and you had the smoke filled rooms. And some of it was, you know, direct action out on the grassroots and site battles and everything else was piled into it. But one of the real battles we've got, because Harriet just mentioned the need to connect social justice and environmental justice, Friends of the Earth describes itself as an environmental justice organisation. We're absolutely striving to be to that. We're absolutely striving to look at the kind of impacts on people, the interdependence of natural systems and so on, we, well the hugely

successful campaign which was, you know, partly Parliamentary, partly working with people, partly working with farmers with food and everything on bees. And it brought in hundreds, well I think hundreds of thousands of supporters, but a whole new cadre of people thought, thank god FoE is working on nature again. And that was great. And for about two or three, four years, this is all quite internal stuff really, but we did really well out of the bees campaign. And people thought Friends of the Earth has finally got back to its roots, it's doing nature. But we didn't take those people on a journey and when we are working on the social justice side, like warm homes, about energy efficiency, or any of the other that we're working at at the moment like the big climate plan, which is very policy wonky. We are not bringing those people who came in on bees with us on the environmental justice one. We're not being able to tell that story as much as we should. So it's just a bit of a caveat that it's very easy for groups to fragment in terms of their audiences rather than being more than the sum of the parts. I don't think the environmental movement is more than the sum of its parts and it bloody well ought to be.

Stephen Joseph: Can I just make a quick comment, a very quick comment. I think we're not very insurgent enough. We need an environmental version of Led By Donkeys to take on some of the, the dark money. And I was thinking particularly in the context of the nature groups of taking on Restore Trust which is attacking the National Trusts under the guise of being interested in big houses. But really so that some of their supporters can, you know, take over and put houses on some of their properties. So I think we need to be a big more insurgent about actually taking them on.

Shaun Spiers: *Thanks Stephen. Really interesting discussion. Thanks everybody. I think the reflection I have at the end is that we, it was interesting Fiona talking about the kind of David Cameron's hug a husky. But since I think, and also Jonathon talking about Local Agenda 21, and since the kind of fag end of the Major Government and leading up to 1997, we've had sort of explicitly, by and large, explicitly progressive politics on where parties want to be seen as progressive on the environment, on international development, on social justice, to a greater or less extent, even under the Johnson Government he was sort of social liberal even if economically Conservative or whatever. And we are now moving into a very different territory with a net zero sceptic Conservative Party leader, a Reform UK leader who says he's an environmentalist but hates the climate hoax, and a culture war. So it is, it is a really interesting time we're moving into. Quite how much we can draw on the history I don't know and how much, whether we've cracked the difference between working under Labour or Conservative administrations I don't know. But I'm sure they'll crack it in the next session. Thank you.*

Session 3: How has policy work been aided by protest and project work? Are their lessons to be learned from the past for our current situation?

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Chris Church: *This session like it says behind me is, How is this work linked to protest and project work? And we will go straight from that into the final session about, Are there lessons from our history for our current situation? We seem to have strayed just a little into that already and I am sure there will be other things to be said. This section, when we started this project we had to try and categorise what we meant by the environmental movement. And part of that was splitting it roughly into three sections. The projects, the protests, the policy. And there's a lot of policy workers Tom suggested, all those environment professionals in London, a lot of them working around a policy agenda. And the protests of course. And the protests are by and large what get into the media. So it's very good we've got Fiona Harvey here from The Guardian. But the largest chunk of the movement is probably the least obvious, all the people working on Wildlife Trust projects around the country. All those people in community farms, local food projects, community energy and recycling. An enormous number of people out there where there's very little coverage. But they're perhaps the people building the green infrastructure. So the question really here is, how does protest and projects support the development of strong policy? And there's been lots of discussion about that in the media. So hopefully we're going to have a good discussion right here and I'm going to ask Joanna Watson who's worked for Friends of the Earth on events, including a fair number of protests I suspect, down the years and then for Fiona to come and talk about this from the media and then Jonathon to reflect. Joanna.*

Joanna Watson: Thank you. Cheers. Yeah I mean I think probably an awful lot of the people that Chris talks about as being working on green projects may also have involved themselves first and last in various forms of protest. I think we are obviously really talking about sort of grassroots people power. But in my particular analysis just today I'm talking probably more about the kind of mass mobilisation public protests rather than small actions and creative happenings, largely because I could talk about this for hours and Chris has only given me five minutes, which is fine. So first of all what I want to say is that it's probably unhelpful to try and attribute campaign success to protest alone. But I think protest does have a role to play. And I think the proof is in the pudding. I don't think Governments would be passing Draconian laws, and we're seeing up to date even more oppressive legal approach to chilling climate protests for instance, if protest wasn't effective. Often the initial protest may not have worked. The Iraq war

went ahead even though millions were on the streets. The Newbury bypass was built after two or three years of grief. We still have a nuclear deterrent. But Tony Blair's reputation legacy has been forever overshadowed by the Iraq war and the huge ambitions of the 1990s roads programme were put on hold on decades and, you know, Twyford Down and Newbury had a lot to do with that. So why is protest important? It raises awareness of an issue, creates publicity, provokes debate and plays a part in changing the prevailing narrative. And I think we've talked about storytelling and narrative being incredibly important. I mean also I think it's worth noting that quite often communities or campaigners battling against the imposition of unwanted sites are often outliers, people long vilified by Governments of the day as subversive and troublemakers like the Suffragettes or Greenham Common have been remembered today as actually making history and as catalysts for change. So whether or not they are huge numbers and whether or not they're hugely visible all the time, I think they do have an impact. I think protest is an incredibly important part in movement building and in forging relationships. You've got to think about the Nanas in fracking on the frontline. They turned up virtually every day for the duration of the attempt to frack on the Preston New Road. And because they were every day their community really got strengthened as a result of what they were doing. And they started connecting with anti-frackers right round the country and eventually with anti-frackers in the States and in Australia, so that the movement becomes international. They didn't actually create the movement, the movement was starting but the protest and visibility was very much a part of it.

Public peaceful protest can boost morale and taking a principled stance publicly can help bring a demoralised silent majority alongside. Not In My Name or In Whose Interests are very powerful statements in a democratic society. And I think, I've only got to think about the mobilisations round the Climate COPs, and I was involved in at least four of those in Bonn and The Hague and in Paris and in Copenhagen, that if those hundreds of thousands of people hadn't turned up and been on the streets, the fossil fuel lobby inside would have had a much clearer run. I wouldn't say we've actually won at the COPs but we have probably had an effect of slowing the lobbyist. And I think the other thing, and I referred to this earlier about the Climate Change Act, was that protest isn't necessarily against something. It often is, or it's often an opportunity, but people coming together to push the Government of the day for the Climate Change Act was a very, very positive and effective thing. And it was seen as a good thing rather than an anti thing. Intersectionality is very important. We were talking a bit earlier about environmental rights and justice. And I think the thing about protest is that different interests can come together in a movement and participate in demos. Protest movements do offer an alternative, a different narrative and that can be aligned

in trends, like in the global south and inspiring cooperation and resistance in other places. The only thing about that is that coalitions are fluid and impactful at a moment in time when short term gains are made but they can tend to fragment again. And it's very important to see how the different pieces of the jigsaw fit together. Protest shouldn't be a numbers game. The media is very prone to say only x numbers turned up. And I think a much more important thing to think about is what are the success criteria for any form of protest. Participating in a demo creates a feeling of solidarity and connection with the wider movement and challenging the prevailing political or social norms can be very, very liberating. It can be a recruitment tool for the movement. People who participate in demos are already thinking about questions of power and what's wrong with the system and standing up and being counted can be so empowering it may well be an entry point for future political decision makers and influencers. I think I'll stop there.

[00:07:21]

Chris Church: *Well thank you. Some really useful stuff there on how protest has helped shape policy. Fiona you've been looking at this from outside to some extent as a journalist. Share your thoughts please.*

Fiona Harvey: Thank you very much. And yes, thank you very much for that Joanna because I think it's really important to remember how important protest has been in so much of this. And I'd just like to point out, I wasn't writing about the environment in the eighties, I was at school. But there was a huge number of successes then which really laid the groundwork for what followed. And I think that, you know, as Shaun was saying earlier, we ought to remember how successful environmental movements have been. Look at for instance, you know, and I know that I've written about this and your involvement in it before Joanna, is things like the campaign to take lead out of petrol, the campaign to stop acid rain, the campaign which Nigel talked about to stop the destruction of the ozone layer, which resulted in the Montreal Protocol in 1987, which was incredibly successful. And there was a great hope in 1987 that that success of solving the ozone layer problem could then be transferred to climate change. That didn't quite happen. And part of that I think was owing to public understanding. I remember twenty years after the Montreal Protocol, I was writing about climate change for the Financial Times. I wrote a story about it. And then I had to go off and get a plane to go to an environmental conference. But the, while I was on this plane the editors of the Financial Times looked at this piece and every time I had mentioned climate change, they changed it to the ozone layer, which of course is a completely different problem with completely different solutions. So it made absolutely no sense. And by the time I got off the plane it had been printed and there was nothing I could do except look like an idiot.

But I said, 'Why have you done this?' And they said, 'Well we think it's more understandable to people, it's more comprehensible. People know about the ozone layer.' So that was a real testament to the protest movements of the 1980s, that twenty years later that's what people were still identifying as the main environmental problem. Why was climate change then so much more difficult to harness in terms of public perception, in terms of doing something about it politically and publicly? Well partly because it's a much more complex problem and partly because the solutions of course run up against far, far greater vested interests and far greater practical problems in solving them than we experience with the ozone layer. And I'd like to look at the role of protest in that as well because there was another great success that Joanna has already mentioned, the Climate Change Act in 2008, which came from, really it came from Friends of the Earth. It came from campaigning for several years before that. I remember talking to Tony Juniper and I think it must have been early 2005 or some time around then. And Friends of the Earth was at that time seen as really, really radical. As kind of, you know, on the outer fringes. And the idea that Government, I know, the idea that Government would take on a piece of policy and essentially have a piece of legislation written by Friends of the Earth, would have really astonished many people I think it's fair to say. And they did. And so that was an enormous success. And it was partly because we had- Partly, it was a lot to do with the kind of, the groundwork that was laid in those years. There was policy groundwork. There was sending people into Whitehall, you know, talking slowly and patiently to Ministers. There were people within Whitehall who really got it as well. And there was, you know, there were charismatic politicians who were prepared to take it on and stake their career on it. So, you know, there were several factors there. If we look at what happened afterwards though, that was a kind of, in terms of I'm a journalist and in terms of the news cycle, that was a real sort of high point where we got climate change sort of back into public consciousness around then. But what happened shortly after that was a confluence of different factors that turned the tide on climate change reporting. And a lot of the climate change perception in the public mind. And part of that was the financial crisis of 2008. So we'd had the Climate Change Act which was an incredibly forward looking piece of legislation. But then we had the financial crisis happening simultaneously and the disaster that that wrought on everything is just, it's hard to even think about now how cataclysmic that was. But it was. And then we had the Copenhagen conference in 2009 which looked from the outside like a disaster. I was there, it wasn't a disaster, it wasn't the disaster that it was portrayed. It actually produced some really useful things. But it was portrayed in the media as a disaster. And we had at that same time climate gate, which were the series of emails that appeared to, that came from, partly from the University of East Anglia, some other universities, and they were seized on by climate sceptics particularly in the US

but also in the UK, and they really, they created a crisis those climate gate emails, from which it was very difficult for the people who were pro-climate action to recover. That was handled very, very badly, the whole Climategate scandal was handled very badly by climate academics, by climate NGOs I'm afraid, and by Governments and other people. And it was really allowed to take hold in the media and a lot of sections of the press had a field day on it. And so what happened with the Climategate emails is that you got a lot of people who had wanted to be climate sceptic for a long time but who had felt that they ought to keep that under wraps a bit because they would look like lunatics, being kind of anti-science lunatics and they didn't want to be seen as that. And the climate gate emails sort of gave them permission to kind of come out from under their rock and say all the things that they'd wanted to say for ages. And so you got climate scepticism being sort of rehabilitated in the media at that time after the climate gate emails. So that's kind of a short period of what we are covering here of just kind of four years. But you can see the kind of, the shifts that took place during that time and made things very, very difficult in terms of pushing forward with climate action.

[00:15:14]

Chris Church: *Thank you Fiona. Yes, done. Moving forward, Fiona mentioned three campaigns from the eighties. Ozone layer, acid rain and lead in petrol. I was fortunate to be working at Friends of the Earth during all those. And I think I was even more fortunate to be line managed by our next speaker. Jonathon you were actually at the top during those campaigns. And many others.*

Jonathon Porritt: Well thank you Chris for mentioning that. I'm not going to mention any of them but it's a happy reminder. I want to talk a bit about policy effectiveness because obviously what we're trying to look at here is what makes policy effective and what is the role of campaigning in terms of making policy effective? Sorry I too am going to talk more about the campaigning than about the project side of it, apologies about that. So I just want to say three things.

Firstly, we have to look at outcomes. To have a proper take on policy effectiveness you've got to focus on outcomes. So that's why Vicki and I are probably going to continue to disagree a little bit about what we have now which is a new system where public goods, public money for public goods and ELMS and all the rest of it. But of course I think back to the Wildlife and Countryside Act which was the critical thing in 1981 where the NGOs were all hugely excited about the campaigning success. Eighty percent NGOs at that time said, that's an eighty percent success story, Wildlife and Countryside Act by way of outcomes. Diddly squat. Literally diddly squat. And that's

because CAP processes and policies and expenditure crushed it. So before I give ELMS and public money for public goods a big tick in the box, check on outcomes in three years' time and we'll see what it looks like.

Secondly relativity. All policy has to be gauged relative to what ought to be happening. And in that respect the Climate Change Act is a huge success. I mean it really is, it needed all of those things back in 2018. And it's, I'm not saying it's bullet proof. We have so many absolutely insane politicians stomping the block these days. Nothing is bullet proof. But that Act has proved itself. Caveat there, five years' time check for outcomes against the later budgets and we'll see how that all looks. But compare the Climate Change Act with the Water Framework Directive. Year 2000, enormous excitement amongst campaigning organisations that courtesy of the EU we would have this overarching, very influential Framework Directive which would be interpreted and then rolled out, deployed across the whole of the water environment in the UK. Twenty-five years on from the Water Framework Directive, whatever the campaigning might have been up until now, we have to say that is an almost complete failure. Almost complete failure. And funnily enough not the mainstream organisations that are making success more likely now but some maverick outsiders who just said, 'What is the mainstream environment movement doing about water in the UK?' Lastly, reversibility. Even if you have the most effective policy deployed in the most effective way, bringing about the most amazing outcomes, lots of those policies still get reversed. I'm only going to mention one example because it irks me so much. In 2007 after three years of really good negotiation between environmental organisations, social justice organisations, housing organisations, the Labour Government introduced the code for sustainable homes, part voluntary, part mandatory. Come 2010 new Government, instantly began to weaken the whole zero carbon built environment agenda and come 2015 when they were left to their devices without the piddling little contribution from the Lib Dems, they axed the whole thing. Just bear in mind that had we stuck with the timetable mapped out through the code for zero, the code for sustainable homes, every single new house in this country today would be a zero carbon house. And you can actually calculate the additional emissions that come from all of that. So reversibility has to be put into the picture.

Last thing, we do do quite a lot of good work stopping bad things happening, let's not forget that. We did stop fracking which is really good. Let's not forget we also put an end to open cast coal mining as a consequence of that amongst other things, although I give the full accolade to Mrs Thatcher, the UK did become Europe's first country to get out of coal completely. And just one tiny word about nuclear, which I don't think has been uttered as a word so far. Last week we

celebrated thirty years of Sizewell B generating relatively low carbon electrons. During the whole of the course of that time, not one other single nuclear power station got built. And we probably won't see a new one until Hinckley Point goes live in, I'd give it about another ten years, but that's okay. Now there was quite a lot of work went in to ensuring that we didn't see another new nuclear power station, though here again proper accolade goes to the industry itself for being such a fucked up useless bunch of people.

[00:20:45]

Chris Church: *Thank you Jonathon. I'm going it up to a wider audience at this point, the wider panel here. And I think for the average member, for a British member of the public, if you said environmental protest, one word probably comes to mind. So Areeba you've heard what's been happening here. Would you like to kick off a discussion?*

Areeba Hamid: Sure. I am guessing that word is Greenpeace. I am going to say something which I don't think is provocative but I think people might think it is. I don't think that any progressive change in any policy anywhere in the world has been made without protest. It could take many forms. It could be just people marching on the streets. Or it could be people holding a banner up. It doesn't have to be Greenpeace climbers climbing onto an oil rig, although that has also led to the end of nuclear dumping in oceans. I do think that we give protests less credit when it's happening in front of our eyes, it's very easy to call it a nuisance, to call those people lunatics, radicals, ecoterrorists, ecozealots. All the names that have been hurled at us. And when we look back at history it's very clear that every progressive movement, not just environmental, protest has had a role to play in it. Civil disobedience has had a role to play in it. So it's just sort of an acknowledgement that it's not about aided by protest, it's essential. Policy outcomes and policy wins, protest is an essential element to that.

[00:22:27]

Chris Church: *Thanks. Shaun while the microphone's going past, you're probably, the Green Alliance is probably least obvious of the NGOs and works most closely with Westminster. How do you see the protest links?*

Shaun Spiers: I think that Extinction Rebellion was transformative in 2018, 2019. And I think that absolutely puts things on the map. And it was, had a palpable influence on Conservative politicians as well as they were, and other politicians. I think the- I know you've got to stick with

history but what's interesting now is this kind of general, well Areeba mentioned it, the ecozealots line, for the sense these are just kind of weird people and shouldn't we focus on the cost of living and so on. And I think that's quite an interesting dynamic, the extent to which protest is galvanising against being alienating. And that's, yes, I don't really have an answer to.

[00:23:32]

Chris Church: *If I can just throw one more in. Stephen, protest, road protests. Someone said a lot of noisy defeats and quite victories. You were on the policy side.*

Stephen Joseph: So actually to quote a previous environmental journalist, Geoffrey Lean who I'm sure Fiona knows well, who said that throughout his career, you know, there were protests and protestors some of which were run by Friends of the Earth. And then Transport 2000 was the group that got in there and cut the deals. And I think that's been very much where, what happened in the nineties was very much that there were protestors, you know, that all the Twyford Down stuff was avowedly and then Alarm UK was avowedly aligned with the more traditional environmental groups. And actually Transport 2000 was a bit of a kind of mediator between all that. Having said that, I mean we did our own stunts. We did do all sorts of stunts around rail fares. People dressed up as fortune tellers to tell you how the, what the best rail fare was because nobody could actually tell you this sort of thing. A plane and a train chasing each other round the streets of Shoreditch to show how- So the, you know, groups like Transport 2000 did their own stunts. But actually in the big scheme of things, those big road protests in the nineties did lead to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment, and the things that gave even the Conservative Governments, certainly then the Labour Government, the cover to cut the roads programme. And that alliance between those groups. I was talking to Phoenix the audience about this. That it was really important. I don't know whether Nigel Doar would agree or Nigel Haigh, or indeed Vicki would agree that there has been a symbiosis. I'm not sure whether that still exists between the XR- I have a sense that XR hate the conventional environmental groups actually, think that they've all sold out. You know don't see any role for them. But that wasn't the case in the nineties and I think it made a big difference. Does that help?

[00:26:05]

Chris Church: *Shaun you wanted a very little one, just very little.*

Shaun Spiers: I was just going to say I was a little bit involved in the campaign to save Oxleas Wood which came on the back of the defeat on Twyford Down. And I remember during one of many assaults of being on the Valley system since then standing on a woodland farm, it's a community farm just east of Woolwich, and being able to say, but for that campaign this would have been a six lane motorway. So they do work.

Chris Church: *I think Vicki caught my eye and then Nigel. Nigel Haigh. But Vicki first.*

Vicki Hird: Yes Joanna talked about a power because I think that's at the heart of this isn't really. And giving power to people. And I think it's interesting we were talking regional and local democracy and whether the numeratis are going to make a difference in the future. But that's one for ten years' time to decide whether that's worked. But I just wanted to make the case for all kinds of protests. Because I have been in various situations where piles of postcards were on the table and, I'm particularly thinking when we were taking the Competition Commission to court. And he said, 'What am I supposed to do with these postcards from Friends of the Earth supporters?' And they, you know, 26,000 postcards, it's not huge compared to some campaigns but and you could say now it doesn't work because they're all emails and they just ignore them. But back then, and those kind of small acts did add up to something. They got us in the room. And I sat in the room with a farmer saying, 'You've got to do something about this. We have a crisis in farming because of the supply chains.' And I would like to give an anecdote to Jonathon because I met somebody in a Wildlife Trust the other day who got into the environment movement remembering it sent a leaf to the Earth Summit when you did that campaign in the Earth Summit in '92 which I was working with you at the time. Last chance to save the earth I think it was.

Jonathon Porritt: Yes, that's a bit sad. Yes.

[00:27:57]

Chris Church: *Nigel Haigh.*

Nigel Haigh: I want to pick up on Stephen Joseph's talk about Transport 2000 to tell the story of the formation of Transport 2000 which emerged from a local protest in York against a ring road in York, just outside the mediaeval walls. And a group of people in York formed a group called York 2000 to fight this ring road. And everybody was against them. And they thought they were going to lose. There was a public inquiry. And by just to the surprise of everybody, they won and

the ring road was refused by the Secretary of State. In the process of, before the outcome came out, they contacted the Civic Trust for which I worked later. I wasn't involved in this but my colleague there called Arthur Percival put them in touch with Civic Societies around England who were also fighting inner ring roads. Because this was the fashion in the late sixties, early seventies. The most famous of course is the London Motorway box. Most people remember that. But they were affecting towns all over the country. And Arthur Percival noticed, well we've got people writing in about these and so he said to York 2000, 'Why don't you organise the conference in York to tell them about your campaign and learn from lessons from other towns who are fighting the same campaigns.' And so they did and at that conference somebody said, 'Well now that we are all here together, why don't we form a national organisation to pool our resources,' and that's why it was called Transport 2000, because of York 2000. But the York 2000 won and at that time there was a change of policy inside Government as a result of these protests which were happening throughout the country. And there was a transport White Paper in 1973 which I will read to you. And it said, 'Even if resources were unlimited, it would be physically impossible in the larger cities to provide for maximum car use, in other towns and cities the attempt to do would involve a scale of redevelopment, a change in character and a loss of buildings, some of them architecturally and historically important, which most people would find unacceptable.' And those are words which any local amenity society could have written themselves. So this was a campaign, local, replicated across the country, coordinated and then it led to Transport 2000. So the battle against road building had two phases. One against building major roads in towns. And that was won in '73. That, the road building campaign between towns, the ones that you were mentioning in the nineties, came much later.

[00:31:22]

Chris Church: *Nigel and then Tom, I know you're waiting to come in. Nigel.*

Nigel Doar: On the protest side of it, I mean I've already mentioned the [incomp 00:31:31], the nice fluffy middle of the road campaigners, did work very closely with the slightly more radical ones. So I personally believe that you need to have that. And there was a period, now I can't even think how long ago it was where, it was before Extinction Rebellion came about, when you kind of got the sense that perhaps there wasn't quite enough of that radical, you know, on that end. Because I think those of us in the middle need it because, you know, otherwise everything gets dragged into the middle and then you just keep compromising your environment out of existence. So you need to have someone on that wing making a noise so that it empowers the path for the

movement in the middle that the system can then deal with. And I think that is something that we probably did get quite right in a lot of cases in the nineties and an example- But protesting wasn't just confined to people you might think would be doing it. I thought one of the strengths that we had then, I mean I can remember going to a protest out the Scottish Office where, you know, there was this fantastic photo on the front page of *The Scotsman* of these guys with Mohican haircuts spitting and pointing nose to nose with the police. And of course it didn't show that just behind them there was like three coach loads of Wildlife Trust members all being nice and fluffy. And so, but these protests, I think actually more impact when they are mixed and where you very clearly demonstrate there's a breadth of people. And there was a comment earlier that, you know, RSPB doesn't go on marches or something, I can't remember who made it. But those organisations like RSPB and the Wildlife Trusts will say, oh we do. We tend to just have, you know, somebody like Climate Coalition or like Chris Packham or someone who sits there and says, 'Well actually you lot ought to be doing this. I'll make a noise and front it, and you need to send the people along to it.' And we do, you know. So that's that part. Can I say something about the project part of it? Because I think they do complement each other really brilliantly because I think everything to do with the environment happens in the real world in real places to real people. And one of things that the Wildlife Trust typically do is we try to build relationships with the politicians, sometimes when they are actually in Government Ministerial positions and sometimes they are not. But the best way of doing that is to bring them face to face with their own constituents, looking at their own projects in their own area and talking to them about how this is influencing the lives of their people. So you know I think back to when- And this happens all over the place, we were running a neighbourhood food programme in Sheffield. And it was in collaboration with the NHS, part of the healthy eating thing. Rehabilitation of a load of allotments and green space. You know disadvantaged housing area and Yvette Cooper came along when she was a Minister and talked in depth about what was going on and so on. And it gradually, this idea that nature and health, it's been a very slowly burn but it's gradually gone up the agenda so that you are now getting, you know, green prescribing as a sort of a- Pretty much now becoming an established way of dealing with parts of your health problems. And I think those practical, you know, ways you can link Government policy to real things on the ground [incomp 00:35:17]

[00:35:19]

Chris Church: *Thank you. Tom you've been a Government adviser as well as a protest organiser. I'm sure you've got some responses on this.*

Tom Burke: Yes, it's beginning to sound a bit like we're playing our latest hits or our oldest hits, you know. Look, really we're losing. Let's be really clear. Jonathon was absolutely right to say what matters are outcomes. Absolutely right what matters are outcomes. Doesn't matter what you do, confusing activity with achievement is a very elementary, a mistake for an activist to do. So we are losing. Outcomes matter. Change is an opera it's not a song. It's especially not a one note song. So yes protest is an important note in a song, but what's the rest of the song? If you don't have the rest of the song, it's just a note that comes and then it goes. And we're not thinking strategically about the situation we're in. And that's what we really ought to be doing.

Chris Church: *Well what, stay with it because we've actually- The second question for this sessions is, are there lessons from history for our current situation? Are we in a different place?*

Tom Burke: We are in a different place. We really are in a different place. 1) because for all of the activity we have done, and for all the enormous vision and activity, actually the planet is in a worse state now than it was fifty years ago. That's real. That's not because we failed in itself, everybody's failed, but we are part of that failure. We have to recognise that. You know we've done lots of extraordinary, brilliant things but they've not been good enough and we need to think harder about what they're going to be. And what alarms me most is, I'm looking at all of that took place in a world order in which there was some predictability. And we've now got a maniac running loose in the United States who's breaking that order up. We're not prepared for that and we really do need to be prepared for that. So we need to think about, less about what we used to do and a lot more about what we've got to do if we're going to keep this going. I think it's a really important emphasis that's come through as a note in all of this about the importance of building things from the base up. I think that's absolutely correct. And I think that's a really important note. You build from people's experience. The trouble with organisations like ours is, we think facts matter because they do. And then we think that it matters if we tell people the facts. Actually it doesn't, because unless the fact's connect to their experience, it doesn't actually change very much. And that's partly what I mean by what should change model. Change model is driven by experience and we're not doing enough. We're trying to connect what we're trying to do to people's experience every day. Okay, that, I mean I could go on but I think just stop at this point.

[00:38:08]

Chris Church: *That's quite a challenge, we're losing. Anybody on the panel want to follow on?*

Areeba Hamid: Well I'm stuck with the mic. We are, I agree. I think that the last- And it's happening quite fast and specifically I wasn't saying that protest is the only thing that works, I do think that it works in combination with a lot of things. I mean I often describe Greenpeace as a Swiss army knife which is because I believe that it's not a one note organisation which is one of its biggest strengths from journalism to activism to political lobbying, everything. It'll take everything and then some to win this fight. I think we've spoken a lot about how to translate these wins from outside the net zero. This is also a win that by the way stuck with us and now has become a bit of a curse. I can't believe that we campaigned for net zero and now net zero is being used against us. Anyway, how do we translate that out of environmental policy to people's lives? How do we- I am actually quite interested in the question of how do we use the presence of these huge member organisations who are really [incomp 00:39:18] and that do go on marches. But what is the next step for them? Because they are representing so many people. And like you say, yes you need the radical flank of the movement, but the radical flanks of the movement also needs the moderates so that we can together sort of shift the conversation. And very often I have found that right now where we are stuck with the Government and the fear of attacking the Government, the Labour Government because we might be inadvertently joining the likes of Reform by attacking them, because at least they are trying to do something right. And I think we have run out of that road pretty fast. I don't even know, I used to think when this Government came into power that no new oil and gas is a done deal. I don't know anymore. And I think that that ground is shifting so fast, so quickly. And unless we actually are ready to flex up our- Go out on the streets and show that there is a political cost for not making that decision, for that was the mandate they were elected on. And I think they are going to lose power if they are going to just sit around and lobby and write sternly worded private letters to No. 10. I don't think we are going to get anywhere.

[00:40:34]

Chris Church: Joanna was-

Joanna Watson: Yes, so I want to build on what you're saying. I'm finding it a very terrifying time to be alive. You know we said at the tea break it's difficult to wake up in the morning and wonder what other horror, you know, whether they're selling Gaza into a kind of, you know, beach resort which is about the most obscene thing I think I've ever heard in my life. But anyway, it is very disruptive. I mean, and I've been in the environmental movement for thirty something years. And I've felt that, you know, there's a lot of inertia. There's inertia in the system. There's the inertia in the movement. There's the, you know, policy grinds slow. And the things that give me some

hope actually is that when you live in a time of real disruption, I think, and I do believe utterly that where change comes is at the grassroots, so I don't necessarily mean necessarily just grassroots activism. But people thinking this is enough, you know. It's kind of revolutionary times. It's almost as if you're liberated to do things. Now I personally don't like anarchy, it makes me very uncomfortable. But I do think that we're in a situation where we can make more of things. I think we're being slightly, potentially liberated which is not to say I think Trump is a good thing. I just mean I think more people might come together to resist in a way that they might not have done even five years ago, particularly going back to what you were saying is, don't rock the boat, Labour might not be as bad as the last Tories sort of thing, you know. We can't, we're not really living in that space. And I think it's moving very fast. I don't think we've grasped it yet. But one reflection I wanted to make about campaigning is that whether the present generation who are so used to digital, and comfortable about digital campaigning, whether in fact this sort of takeover of big tech is going to be so repelling for quite a lot of younger activists, whether they will start thinking about what offline tactics are and who they should work with and how they can come together. And what kind of movements they want to build on. So I think we live, it's a Chinese curse, we live in interesting times but that doesn't mean we can't build.

[00:42:34]

Chris Church: *Jonathon I think.*

Jonathon Porritt: I'm not totally with Tom on the we are losing story. Sorry but that's just reality. And there are some pretty deep reasons behind that which we wrestle with as a movement. It's not possible for us to take on the dominant ideology of the last five decades, simply put neoliberalism. And let's just remember for the whole of the period you are talking about with this analysis of the environment movement, we have had to work within the most aberrant, rapacious, destructive, exploitative variant of capitalism there has ever been. So the fact we're losing isn't too surprising. So we can't take on the big construct but again Tom's comment about how Treasury works, we have missed so many tricks as a movement. We've not even been able to help people understand the pernicious consequences of externalised costs. We've not even been able to persuade people the utter irrationality of continuing to subsidise the thing that we're apparently trying to move our way out of. There are so many elements in the neoliberal grand ideology that we collectively could be more effective in highlighting the massively damaging impact of. And we haven't done that. So costs are still externalised, limitlessly, subsidies still pour out of Government coffers. So all of these things are really critical. And I think we do have to learn that from history.

Just the other quick point about learning from history. The previous time where neoliberalism ran amok and destroyed more lives than we can imagine was of course in America in the 1930s. And out of that emerged the new deal. And we forget that administrations at that time in America were able to correct some of the massive dislocations in society through a fifteen year period of investing in people's direct needs, in their communities, in all sorts of different ways. Now we have something floating around in our midst called the Green New Deal which doesn't really work terribly well here in the UK. But just a tiny point about the future. There's something in America called the Green New Deal From Below. And even through the four years of the Biden administration, the Green New Deal From Below has achieved more at the local level in terms of binding communities into sustainable ways of living and transforming their lives than has been the case here in the UK. So for me big priority, learning from lessons from the past, Green New Deal From Below, understanding what happened with the Depression, and the New Deal.

[00:45:27]

Chris Church: *Thanks. Fiona did you-*

Fiona Harvey: Thanks very much. Thank you. I think that when we're looking at the lessons from the past, I think it's really important not to learn the wrong lessons. And there were a lot of things that worked in the past that perhaps will not work now. And I think it's also really important to recognise that some of the messages from, about the environment that people have had in the past, and perhaps have been a bit of a turnoff for many people. There is a kind of strand of environmentalism which is, you know, attractive to some people about being quite aesthetic, perhaps a little hair-shirt, you know, doing without some of the things of modern life. And I think that that is very alienating to a lot of people who are not enjoying the benefits of capitalism. And there has got to be some better way of talking to people than talking to people about giving things up. People who don't have anything, or you know, have very little in our society, it's very alienating to talk to them about giving things up. So I think we really need to, to think about, you know, the way in which we present this to people. And I think in this country there has been a sort of tendency, in some cases to see the environment as a middle-class concern. And for that to be kind of inimical to the lives of ordinary people. And we see that today for instance in the, you know, we've got the Green Party campaigning against renewable energy effectively.

Jonathon Porritt: No, no, no you cannot say that.

Fiona Harvey: Because, well they are campaigning against pylons.

Jonathon Porritt: You, you- Sorry you can't say the Green Party are campaigning against renewable energy. You can say the Green Party is campaigning against the infrastructure investments that will deliver a share of the renewable energy. You're a journalist, let's get that right.

Joanna Watson: It's still wrong though.

Jonathon Porritt: I'm not saying it's not. I am not saying it's not. I agree it's wrong.

Fiona Harvey: Jonathon it's all very well to be in favour of wind farms but if you are not in favour of getting the energy from those wind farms into people's homes, then you're not really in favour of renewable energy.

[00:48:04]

Chris Church: *Okay.*

Jonathon Porritt: Which way are you going?

Chris Church: *I'm going to slightly reclaim this because we are a history project. Remember, that's why we're here. And one of the things that has come up, we've got, it's now twenty past, we've got another half hour in fact until we finish. What I would like to do is allow the last ten minutes for reflection from the panel. I would like to give ten minutes to the audience because you've sat there very patiently and I suspect there are several people who would like to ask questions. But I'd like to spend, go back for the next ten minutes, so we talked about, several people have said we have to build from the local. We can't rely on clicktivism and so on. And we have to build from the local in a whole new situation. A very different one. But we have built from the local in the past in different ways, whether it was Local Agenda 21, or roads protests or other things that have kind of- It's easy to say we've got to build from the grassroots and talk about the Green New Deal From Below. Any of the panel think, okay, is there anything we can learn from the grassroots movements of the past for the grassroots movements that we urgently need now?*

[00:49:33]

?? Did you say you want the audience?

Chris Church: *No, no, this is the panel. I'll come back to the audience in a minute. Stephen.*

Stephen Joseph: Firstly can I just be a little bit, you know, a slight ray of optimism in this.

?? Steady on.

Stephen Joseph: Well only because there's I think two dangers in the Tom, Jonathon, we lost, or we're losing kind of agenda. Which is, 1) it says right we'd better all just make for the hills and dig some retreats and you know that are resilient against five degrees warming. And secondly but more importantly for this project, I think it's about saying, so does that mean that if there hadn't any environmental movement over the last fifty years, nothing would have changed? In other words, you know, that we've been completely irrelevant. And I think there's the more interesting question is, there have been some things that have been mentioned earlier, lead in petrol, which have made things better. And what can we learn from those going forward for the future? And given the existence of social media and other things that take you in a different direction, they won't be the same grassroots movements, they won't be the same sort of things. But I think just to say it's all terrible and, you know, that we are losing across the piece, which is true if you look at the aggregate which are the most nature depleted country. We, you know, climate change has run away etc. But there are things that have changed and have got better and we need to learn from those. I've got three quick comments. One of which I've said before about voices and dialogue being, you know, actively promoting that rather than seeing it as a byproduct. Secondly, a linked comment about devolution and place. Shaun said it right at the start about people valuing place and building on that. I think that's really important. The devolution is a route to doing that though as discussed if Reform win all the Mayors in May then, you know, there will be some different stories to be told there. But even so the impact on place of that we're already seeing a bit of that in the States actually. So the use of devolution powers I think will be much more of a thing in the future. And then trying to do what various people have said about bringing environmental and social justice together which means more radicalism rather than less. So if you look at the polling and focus groups on aviation, majority of people support a frequent flyer levy for example. And so you could head in that direction. And I'd just go back to a history point. One of the things I was involved in years and years back was a magazine called Undercurrents which promoted radical alternatives to community technology. Some people here will remember it. At that time the idea that there might be a lot of wind farms around the place was just pipe dreams, you know. It was things that people at the Centre for Alternative Technology talked about. And now there's lots of them. And I just wanted to mention that partly because the economics of solar and wind

power, unless Trump & Co actively make it illegal to put up another solar panel or a wind farm, which I can imagine they might do, and even then it's going to be difficult, economics trumps all of, literally, all of those things.

[00:53:18]

Chris Church: *Tom.*

Tom Burke: Yes thank you. Just to be really clear, I said we're losing, I didn't say give up. And I have no intention of giving up. But I better recognise where I am. So let me give you a couple of numbers that inform that sense of we're losing. When I was born there were two and a half billion on the planet. There are now eight billion people on the planet and they're [incomp 00:53:39] So the impact on that earth survival system is a lot more, even when I started fifty years ago as an environmentalist, than I understood then. And I'm just accepting the reality. I know what I'm dealing with. So let me tell you another bit. You talk about social justice, we're all very casual and of course we all agree, social justice is a good thing. Let's look at what the billion and a half people who live like us, average earning about 59,000 dollars a year per capita income. Six and a half billion people out there don't earn that and they all want to. Unless can figure out a clever way to give them that, they're not about to give up on trying. So we need to be really serious if we're going to deal with these problems on the scale we're dealing. We don't need to reassure ourselves. I don't need reassurance that we've done great things. I have been part of doing a lot of those great things. They haven't been enough.

[00:54:35]

Chris Church: *I think Nigel was keen to come in.*

Nigel Doar: I somebody going to answer your question.

CC I was hoping someone was going to answer my question.

Nigel Haigh: Our project is the UK 1970 to 2020 in the UK. But for all the points that Tom has been making about we're in trouble, if the UK was perfect, we've eliminated coal, let us assume we've reached net zero when we say we are going to, but it won't make a fig of difference if India, China and do I dare mention the United States go on burning coal and go on, and 'Drill baby drill.'

So the point I'm making is that the solution is not a British solution, it is a global solution and we are not dealing with that here today.

Tom Burke: No but the example we give is the only chance we have, so we'd better do it because if we don't nobody else will. And they may not do it anyway.

[00:55:45]

Chris Church: *Nigel.*

Nigel Doar: Sorry just see as I've got it. I did before we got into this session, I did kind of make a few little notes that were, well this is sort of lessons I think I've learned. And they seem to be bizarrely virtually the same as Stephen's. And I think the whole- I think positively we do need to link the environment into people's lives, the issues in real places and do it better. And I'm not entirely sure how you do that but certainly more or us need to do more of it. We do need to build bottom up and we need to do that by having conversations and having more of them because unless you talk to people in their language, or at least take [incomp 00:56:29] their language, and you know, you're on a hiding to nothing anyway. And I think one of the other lessons I would say keep going, because everything has been so slow. And I did a similar exercise I suspect to what Tom and Jonathon have done in preparation for this. And I looked back and tried to identify what things were that were really great steps forwards and that I found it really hard to find any because they're all bits of legislation that patch up some previous legislation that was a bit shit. And then, and when you look at the trends, more and more legislation and more and more protection and more and more political consensus around how fantastic the environment is and what we should do about it. At the same time all of the statistics on what's actually happening are going in the wrong direction except for arguably the reduction in carbon emissions. So it's obviously not working, you're right. But the things that did work work because somebody recognised that you have to do it step wise. You have to bring people with you. You have to accept that you didn't get everything you wanted. You have to aim down there so you get the next little bit and then you have to grind it again and take the next step. You know, and keep going. I don't want to reach of my career having achieved bog all. I fully expect by the time I retire we will have banned the use of peat in horticulture, you know. But you know-

?? [incomp 00:58:11]

Nigel Doar: Exactly. So you know you just have to keep going. Now the thing I have no idea about is actually how do you speed it up? Because I also agree it has to happen much, much faster.

[00:58:24]

Chris Church: *Vicki then Areeba.*

Vicki Hird: Yes. This is quite a struggle really, I had two, I think I like what Stephen said but I keep coming back to the inequality element of- And in my world working on food and farming, you know, talking to politicians about changing what people eat or, you know, changing the pricing of it is nigh on impossible right now. So I think tackling inequality you could argue should be at the heart of all our campaigning. And the other side of it is tackling marketing and advertising which I know is a very specific thing. But again it seems to me one of the most problematic factors of what is making people feel like that feel in all sorts of ways and do what they do, is what advertising and marketing and the very brilliantly subtle advertising and marketing makes them feel. You know you buy your cat food based on whether it makes feel you're a cool person. I'm slightly being flippant but advertising and marketing is fucked. I don't have the answer of how to get that. We've got somewhere on food in terms of junk food but we're talking way beyond this, we're talking about cars, we're talking about clothes. You know and if we don't address that, it's very hard to see that we've going to kerb the kind of things that we've been talking about which are driving all the things in the wrong direction.

[00:59:41]

Chris Church: *So, yes. I mean the challenge remains neoliberal capitalism and so on. But Areeba.*

Areeba Hamid: I'll try and answer your question about lessons. I started campaigning on ending coal in India. And at that time it felt like an impossible task, in the UK as well let alone in India. And one of the things that we used to often sit and discuss was how do we decouple that growth graph with the coal development graph? And it has happened. It has happened in lots of countries. This country shut down coal, the coal powered plant last year after 140 years of powering its progress on coal and coal alone. So things change is slow but then suddenly it happens really fast. So we don't know what external factors might happen that might push it but I totally agree with Stephen that the economics of it is trumping everything else. I mean China is building more solar than any country ever has in a year. So I think we are moving, some of it will be economics, some

of it will be about equity and some of it will be about radical solutions. I think the scarcity mindset, I mean I reject the idea that everybody needs to do less and they shouldn't have the lifestyles that others have had because of climate change. I think there's an idea of abundance that we need to talk about. And there is money, we should actually tax the wealthy, the ultra-wealthy. The root of inequity is with some people who have so much wealth, who also happen to have some of the largest carbon footprints in the world, they're taking private jets everywhere, not just frequent flyers. But you know, the fact that Taylor Swift, one of the most popular artists in the world was criticised because of the private jet use, there is something there. People understand this instinctively that this stuff is related to their lives and to what has happened with climate. So I think there is, there's a case for tackling that scarcity mindset and finding the money where it actually exists instead of sitting there and saying, 'Actually we don't have the money and some people should continue to live poorly.' I reject that idea.

[01:01:57]

Chris Church: *Okay. I said we would give the audience, I've got, I'm going to take two questions. I can see two hands already. They are both men. These have got to be short. These are not speeches, these are, they're questions.*

MW Michael Wallace [incomp 01:02:21] EU environmental policy for the last thirty years. On the neoliberal economics point, the simple reality is that if something's profitable and legal, then it will be done. If it's not profitable or not legal and enforced then it won't be done. And that's why regulation is so important but somehow the debate has twisted away from that by [incomp 01:02:43] lobbying. So my question would be, we need to look at this politics. And if you look on the right, literally the further right, people are not necessarily pro-big business, they don't necessarily want their local allotments covered in [incomp 01:03:00] or their lakes. So I think there's a lot of appealing that can be done to those people and maybe that's what people should be thinking more is about to widen that appeal because it's not just about some sort of anti-capitalist thing. It's about saying what's going on in your local environment and who can we mobilise in order to get [incomp 01:03:22] issues [incomp 01:03:21]

[01:03:23]

Chris Church: *Okay. I'll take the other one and then invite the panel to respond to both. Phoenix.*

Phoenix Rainbow: Phoenix from the Climate Emergency Centre Network and back to the early days of road protests and Reclaim the Streets and Occupy movement and many grassroots movements we've run a lot of centres where all these groups come through. So maybe my question for the panel is how, it's been incredible listening to you all and the body of work that's been done there and we've kind of come from the bottom up and seen these groups working on [incomp 01:03:58] How can we better coordinate our strategies so that we can win, to change policy and create could projects and protests. Because there is always been the cooperation, some of the panel were saying [incomp 01:04:12] days of Friends of the Earth. So may Earth First, the Dongas. And why do XR in more recent times with political circles and a Big Ask kind of getting together all the NGOs recently, how can we understand how Government works better and how do strategy and coordinate better to create change in policy? And [incomp 01:04:35] we've set up a network of thirty-two climate emergency centres in empty buildings all over the UK with very little money, people using [incomp 01:04:44] How can we create the places to [incomp 01:04:48]

[01:04:51]

Chris Church: *Okay. Two quite different questions. Who wants to:-*

Tom Burke: I have just a quick comment on the first one. Climate policy failure is a fastest way you could think of to get rid of capitalism. I'm not sure, I'm not sure it's worth the deal. But if you collapse the actuarial basis in which you price risk, then you collapse capitalism. The problem is capitalism isn't driven, there are plenty rapacious Musks around and tech bros. But actually most of the capital that gets allocated is our savings. And that's the risks that we're not taking to people about from climate change. Their savings.

[01:05:33]

Chris Church: *Anyone else want to come in?*

Stephen Joseph: On that last point, and just if I can have a go at both of those. Picking up that last one, there are people in the sort of finance world who keep trying to get the pension and insurance companies to recognise the fact that they are owned by us and actually do what broadly we want them to do as opposed to some short term things. And I think the environmental movement isn't really engaged with that world very much, the sort of green finance world. Mark Carney was quite big on it at one point but anyway- So I think that's- And then Tom, I'm basically

agreeing with Tom. I think that's a whole world that we've not really exploited. On the coordinating better, I think there's lots of ways that can be done and that is something where there are some examples from the last fifty years of successes and perhaps failures as well. There was an attempt by Arthur Scargill to set up an Energy 2000 which was going to make the case for an integrated non-nuclear energy strategy, since he insisted on running it out of his headquarters, the rest of the environmental movement wouldn't touch it. Whereas, as I said, Transport 2000 was run by the conservation groups with the NUR providing the money. So anyway, there's a good example of an old failure. But I think there's things about that, about judicial review, about just coordinating different, a thousand different strategies all pointing things. And the only other comment I would make, Tom's point about, you know, being good on policies and not on the politics, actually understanding where the politicians are, not just the politicians but the special advisers, where are they coming from? What are the buttons that they will press that will press them? And we're not very good at thinking about that, about, you know, Labour's missions or whatever they are this week. And finding out where environment might tick some boxes, or you wouldn't even it environment, but the things that we might want to have happen. Green Alliance are quite good at this stuff, at understanding where the politicians are coming from and the people round them, feels like a really important storm.

[01:07:59]

Chris Church: *Okay. We've got time for about one more minute from each speaker. And I will therefore give each speaker the opportunity and three or four want to speak, the others, I will give all the others the opportunity.*

Fiona Harvey: Thanks very much. We were asked about the anti-capitalism. I think something that's incredibly important here is that I don't think that our current economic models actually account of the real impacts of climate crisis. If you look around we are seeing prices going up for everyday food stuff. Already in your shops, in your shopping basket today you can see the impact of the climate crisis. The price of coffee, the price of chocolate, the price of various food stuffs are going up. That's going to accelerate, you know, we've seen studies saying that a third of global food production is at risk. We are seeing studies saying, you know, massive tipping points on the horizon, you know, things like the amok slowing down or changing. We are seeing things like in India seeing such massive rises in the number of and duration of heatwaves, that agriculture becomes almost impossible for large parts of the year. We are seeing, you know, the impacts of wildfires and so on that we've just seen, we're seeing flooding, etc. etc. etc. And yet we are seeing economic papers being written by respectable economists saying climate change will cost five

percent of GDP. I mean that's just clearly nonsense. If this is a problem that was only going to result in shaving five percent off GDP, then frankly we can all go home, you know, because who cares about five percent of GDP, that's not a disaster. The truth is that these economic papers that say things like that are written by economists who have not understood the science. Have not understood the problem and actually we need some economists who understand the science, understand the problem, and can say this isn't about five percent of GDP. This is about all GDP. This is about having no GDP. So I think that's really, really important when you are talking about to do with capitalism. And then just on this point about a better understanding of Government. Well I wish that this Government better understood government.

[01:10:53]

Chris Church: Okay. I'm going to send the microphone over that way and invite people there to have a final remarks.

Nigel Haigh: I am appalled by Rachel Reeves and our Prime Minister talking about growth at all costs. And the Prime Minister talking about NIMBYs and bulldozing his way through without any conception at all that people care about their local surroundings and that you don't bulldoze through. And how have we failed to get that kind of simple message across to our politicians?

Vicki Hird: I think Fiona put it very well I have to say. My final thought is actually a bit, it's a controversial one that I have been mulling over for many years about have we got too many NGOs? And whether all the money that's going into the back end of those NGOs could be released to support the kind of grassroots work, paying people for their time to do things locally if we merged. But I'm sure that I don't say that as Wildlife Trust, I say that as myself. But I do think there's a lot of big wealthy corporate NGOs out there that could merge quite helpfully. And given the crisis that we've got ahead, maybe we should be thinking about that.

Nigel Haigh: That's a very interesting lot.

Nigel Doar: I'd just like to say, I think probably for me internalising the externalities is the big thing because it's obvious that the economy and the way it works is the main thing that's driven most of the damage over the last fifty years and more. I think possibly the environment movement has had a bit of an issue though that causing itself a problem because there are, there's a bit of a split. I think, you know, there are some people who don't want to internalise the externalities

because it's morally abhorrent to have nature and stuff incorporated in your economic assessments and things in that pounds, shillings and pence way. That's very counterproductive. And I think how we manage to get nature reflected in the economy in a way that is acceptable to even, for everyone in the environment movement is going to be a challenge but therefore we should really face. And I think the role of regulation is very important because I will go to back to peat. I think the peat story illustrates something that is also applicable to climate change, that what's happened over the years since we started a campaign to get rid of it is everyone has voluntarily agreed that we want to stop using peat in horticulture. And there have been lots of back slapping, lovely photo calls saying we've achieved it and the peat industry has all been on board and the Government's been on board, and we have voluntary people to help them achieve it, we've set loads of targets and time after time after time, they've been missed. We have ended up with a situation where the voluntary sector has grown the market for peat alternatives hugely, you know. We now buy and sell four times more than we ever sold peat. But we still buy and sell the same amount of peat. And I can see that happening with the whole carbon renewable energy thing. You need someone to regulate it to say know we are not going to burn coal, no we are not going to burn oil, and do that on a global level. Because otherwise there's always an economic reason for running two horses at the same time. And it's [incomp 01:14:33] about the economy dropping everything.

[01:14:36]

Chris Church: *Right. Let me go down that side and I'll come back to the centre. Final remarks.*

Stephen Joseph: I'm going to give a plug for a new group that Roger Harrabin who will be known to lots of people here has got me into, which is called Our Grandchildren's Climate. And the website's been built be Alex Kirby by the way, another name here, which is all about having another voice for older people who will say, actually we're not the selfish bastards that we're portrayed as by Reform and the Tories. We actually do believe that climate change is important. And that's an example of the more voices that I think we're going to need to say things. Thank you.

Chris Church: *[incomp 01:15:28]*

Areeba Hamid: Are you ready?

Tom Burke: Am I ready yes. Okay, well I- Yes don't give up, was a song that comes to mind. I won't sing because I can't sing. But *Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow.*

Chris Church: *Well thank you. Concise.*

Areeba Hamid: Environmentalism is now mainstream. Climate change is now mainstream. And I think this is what happens, maybe the reason why we are getting attacked is because we are becoming more powerful and that is the thought that I cling onto in the darkest moments. And I think that is something to build from.

[01:16:11]

Chris Church: *Shaun.*

Shaun Spiers: Thanks. I've found it really interesting the insight that a lot of what the last fifty years have been about is working with rising prosperity and the post-cold war peace deal. And that and not the whole fifty years but the recent years and we are in a new time now with kind of recession and poor standards of living since about 2008. And now a massively unstable world big increase in defence spending. And an organisation like Green Alliance has always sort of leant into the main where politics are and not tried to take on the neoliberal paradigm. But I think the next year or two will tell whether that's still feasible and whether we do need a kind of whole new economic narrative which I don't think the environment sector has been terribly good at doing. There's a hell of a big task. And also reconnecting with the peace movement because if we end up having the next few years with just massive increases in defence spending, what you risk I think is not achieving better living standards for people, better schools, better hospitals and that leaves the door right open to this kind of Reform UK Government. And that is probably about the most depressing note on which to end, which I is why it's so good that Joanna is going something really uplifting.

[01:17:32]

Chris Church: *Let me go to Fiona. I'll come back to you last.*

Shaun Spiers: Fiona's going to be uplifting.

Chris Church: *Fiona.*

Fiona Harvey: I've said mine.

Chris Church: *You've said, oh well Jonathon. Last thought.*

Jonathon Porritt: Well I just want to thank Vicki for tossing a lovely forlorn cause on the table which is better cooperation and indeed collaboration and merging between national NGOs. That's great. I think there will be a lot of new energy around by the way. We don't give up. We do find new ways of bringing things to bear on this. There's huge experience in this movement about how to do things well locally. And we just need to bear in mind that organisations like Friends of the Earth have been hugely impactful in that respect. Remember the transition towns moment for a while which suddenly got into competition with Friends of the Earth. I think the energy is going to come locally. I think it'll bind people together around climate, health which is going to be absolutely critical and housing. And for me that is an opportunity where we're going to see a lot of new, really hard work put into bringing social justice and environmental goals together very practically and that's the way to fight the culture wars, not through social media.

[01:18:46]

Chris Church: *Joanna.*

Joanna Watson: I didn't expect, I hope I'm not getting the last word. I'm sure there'll be another one.

Chris Church: *[incomp 01:18:53]*

Joanna Watson: Oh right, okay, I'll be quick. I think what I've been thinking about listening to the history stuff we've been talking about today is just how much wisdom there is, you know, in this room, or amongst these people because of the experiences we've had. It doesn't mean we're necessarily wiser than anybody else but there is a lot of stuff to be collected. And somebody said to me earlier today that there is a huge appetite out there from younger people who don't know the stories, who don't know the history, who don't know what worked, or who really are excited by what was achieved and want to kind of reconnect. I think it was Saskia, that's who said it. And I sort of feel that there might be an enormous opportunity if organisations locally or wherever

kind of fostered a relationship between young people who feel a bit deracinated, don't have those stories, don't necessarily have that experience. But they huge creativity, hopefully optimism and a lot to live for. And the wisdom of elders. And if we can kind of foster intergenerational activism rather than older folk over here and younger people sort of there, and somehow build that. Not in the sense that the elders, 'Oh we did it this way and so should you.' But more, 'What can learn from each other in this completely changed context?' So that's my optimism.

[01:20:10]

Chris Church: *Phew! I said we would end this session at five fifty, and it is now five fifty. I'm going to ask Saskia just a minute, let me just mention a few points. We're in a new place. That's come up again and again and we need new solutions. How much we can learn from what we have done. But as Tom said, we have done great things, things have been achieved. God knows what it would be like if we hadn't been there. I mean that's always worth remembering when we are feeling depressed or we're losing. We have an economic system that's almost impossible to challenge. It's harder to get regulation. But we have an identity. Areeba pointed out that by and large environmental support is mainstream. It may be very passive but it's there to be built on. And as we move into this weird new place, maybe we should hang onto that. So, Saskia before I say, well no let me just say thank you to all the panel now because it's been long, long afternoon and I hope you feel it's been useful and interesting. I certainly found it fascinating and I hope all those who stayed with us have too. So I think a round of applause is in order.*

[Audio ends: 01:23:44]