Witness seminar: The environmental movement in Scotland, 1970 – present

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 made 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 5th June 2025 at Graham Hills Building, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. We are extremely grateful to our hosts, Professor Arthur McIvor and the Scottish Oral History Centre, for generously providing our venue for the recording, and to all those involved in organising and contributing to the meeting. The participants were asked for permission to make this document public.

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

Participants (in alphabetical order):

Danny Alderslowe – Wheels of Fleet

Jess Pepper – Climate Cafe

Jo Pike – Scottish Wildlife Trust

John Simpson – Scottish Raptor Study Group

Lloyd Austin - independent

Ric Lander – Friends of the Earth Scotland

Stuart Housden - Scottish Environment Link (Fellow)

Zarina Ahmad – Women's Environmental Network

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

Dr Barbara Brayshay

Jeremy Iles

Professor Oli Mould

Dr Saskia Papadakis

Dr Toby Butler

Host contribution

Professor Arthur McIvor

1) Session A: What are the key moments and turning points in the development of environmental activism in Scotland?

Jeremy Iles: *Welcome to the Witness Seminar on the Oral History of the Environmental Movement in Glasgow. Thanks Arthur McIvor [Sottish Oral History Centre] for hosting us. And we're going to start this Session A, Barbara Brayshay is going to be facilitating this session.*

Barbara Brayshay: *Hi. Yes, well it's really fantastic for me to be here back in Scotland because actually I did my PhD in Scotland, in the Outer Hebrides. So I've got very- I worked in the Outer Hebrides with the University of Sheffield and did a doctoral research project there as well. So it's great to be back in Glasgow where we used to stop off on our way to get the ferry, where we would be horribly sick usually. And the other overriding memory I have of Scotland is of the midges. But anyway, there don't seem to be many of those around today. So I thought we'll start this session just by very briefly going round the circle and asking everyone who is on the panel to introduce themselves but quite briefly, just say your name and where you come from, where you're coming from, organisation or whatever. And then when we actually get into the actual panel sessions then you can speak to that a little bit more. But just as an introduction so that everyone in the audience knows who you are. So could we start over there please?*

Jess Pepper: Hi I'm Jess Pepper.

Barbara Brayshay: *I was going to say you've got your hand over your thing so I couldn't-*

Jess Pepper: Climate Café Network.

Barbara Brayshay*: Great.*

Ric Lander: Thank you. I'm Ric Lander and I'm at Friends of the Earth Scotland.

Lloyd Austin: Hi I'm Lloyd Austin. I'm listed as independent that's because currently I'm freelance, work part time with various NGOs.

Jo Pike: I'm Jo Pike. I'm the Chief Executive of the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Stuart Housden: I'm Stuart Housden. I'm listed as a trustee of Wildlife and Countryside Link, Scotland. It's actually Scottish Environment Link and I'm a Fellow of Scottish Environment Link. My career is with the RSPB which started down south in 1976 and I moved to Scotland at the beginning of 1994 and retired in 2017.

Barbara Brayshay: *Lovely thank you.*

John Simpson: John Simpson. I'm from the Scottish Raptor Study Group. That's all I have to say on that.

Danny Alderslowe: It gives me more time. Hi, I'm Danny Alderslowe, super-sub last minute. I've just cycled down in the fantastic new bike lanes, since I last lived in Glasgow. And I'm the community gardener for Govanhill Baths Community Trust. And community gardener for the Glasgow Eco Trust. And I'm also very proud to be woodwork and events person for the GalGael Trust.

Zarina Ahmad: Hi everybody I'm Zarina Ahmad and I am the co-director of Women's Environmental network.

Barbara Brayshay: *Lovely. So the first topic that we're going to address today is 'What are the key moments and turning points in the development of environmental activism in Scotland?' So I suppose it would be- I think actually perhaps an interesting way to start would be, would somebody like to take us back in time and perhaps start at the beginning? Perhaps would you like to, Stuart, would you like to?*

[00:03:38]

Stuart Housden: Shall I have a go now? I'd just like to get people in the mindset of sort of pre and post devolution, I think, to start with, because having lived and worked through the devolution process, it was very exciting and it opened up new opportunities for us all. But prior to that there's a lot of things happening at a UK or GB level which impacted on Scotland. The Wildlife and Countryside Act in 1981 had big ramifications in Scotland which led ultimately to the break-up of the GB body, Nature Conservancy Council and the establishment of what became NCC Scotland and then Scottish Natural Heritage. And that had pros and cons. There was also I think the growth of the NGOs, particularly those associated with wildlife, and that was in response to threats such as oil

pollution, growth in understanding of the threat nature was under. And also a desire by the public, I think, generally to support acquisition of land to manage as nature reserves to give people access to green space. And during the eighties and nineties, this was really accelerating very fast and it equipped NGOs like the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB and others with resources and outreach and capacity to do things, which actually dwarfed the state, the state was not doing the equivalent amount. It just- the nature reserves, the science had been largely removed. So there was a big step up in professionalism, impact. And I think, having moved to Scotland, sort of started my job in '94, there was no debate here. Ministers were down in Westminster, the civil service were back here running the shop. And I had been used to meeting informally with Ministers or agriculture and various- I was in charge of political lobbying for the RSPB. We weren't supposed to call it political lobbying but that's what we were doing. We modelled ourselves on the National Farmers' Union, who had the biggest disproportionate impact of any lobby group, in my view. And we were finding it difficult to get traction, the future of agriculture, how forestry was conducted, big fights over SSSIs, and the application of this new Act into Scotland, caused all sorts of tensions. And it was a very closed shop. Really difficult to gain access to. And as we went into the process of devolution, suddenly we had a civil service that was forced to be more responsive to the needs of people. And we had more Ministers based here at home that we could gain access to, despite the best efforts of civil servants to stop it. So I would say those were some of the really big changes. There was a casework, the Flow Country, changes to tax policy that affected forestry. Huge fights over forestry, front page news from somewhere in Caithness and Sutherland on the national newspapers. Big issues around protecting key sites and getting them designated as SSSIs. People on Orkney getting hung in effigy because they were supporting the SSSI notification. At the same time as they were doing the same thing in the Somerset Levels, I should say as well. So things like that. And then court cases, RSPB tackled, with WWF, the Cairngorms funicular, which ultimately we lost but things like that. The Government had never seen NGOs stepping up in this way. And that came at huge cost, and this is my last point, because RSPB was a neighbour, a neighbouring landowner to the funicular. And that gave us a locus to take through the Scottish judicial system, a case, a judicial review, we needed locus. It's very narrowly defined, how that's done in Scotland. And the consequence was, we were trying to build a visitor centre at the time, and Highlands and Islands Enterprise having told us they would give us money towards a visitor centre, took eleven months then to turn us down and give us no money. Our Christmas party, which

lots of civil servants used to attend, an edict went out from a senior civil servant forbidding anyone from SNH or any civil servant to attend our Christmas party. And we were completely cold shouldered. And that was, as it were, the downside because suddenly, it's a small country and you can become isolated and got at. And there, that sort of thing going on at that time. So I'll stop there but there's a lot more, loads more I can say. But I think those are the sorts of - it's that big change, the access, the ability to influence things and deal with things. And taking that away from the small group of pretty closed senior civil servants who sort of ran the show and denied us access. We weren't a stakeholder worth bothering about and then suddenly they had to take us seriously.

[00:09:06]

Barbara Brayshay: *Danny, you were saying you'd like to speak.*

Danny Alderslowe: Yes, yes. That was really interesting because, coming at it from a different angle, of sort of like, a massive turning point, key moments, for a lot of the community I'm aware of is the nineties, you know, the road protests, nuclear. And then the land rights, in Scotland it was the Harris Super Quarry and Assynt was one of the first community buy-outs. So what happened to the family, I feel the community that we all met in the nineties, like you met people who were in the Council of 100, which was Red Clydeside working class people against Faslane from the sixties, seventies. People like Walter Morrison etc. And also the massive ripples from Greenham Common. That created a lot of women activists in Scotland in the sixties, seventies and eighties, you know. I'm trying to say again, knowing that family, part of your education- because where I lived at Pollok Free State, we called it the Pollok Free State university, people got degrees. But you know you learnt about the world. You learned about campaigns. We had visitors from the Tarkine forests in Tasmania. Dan Johnson, the Nuxalk people from British Columbia etc. and all that. So they ripples, but you know, historically, I was meeting working class people, because a lot of my working class comrades, friends and brothers were saying, 'Oh Dan is that you off to join your middle class friends in Newbury?' Because you were going to down to help them treehouses. And I says, 'Well you need to meet the Italian socialists and comrades, because their focus is on the land and who owns it.' And I felt like that's sort of, the culture, the sort of working class here, we were behind. We were very reactionary. How can we stop something when it gets

proposed? And that changed thankfully from the nineties. But I just took note that a big thing, you know, certainly in my time, was Thatcher and '83 when the buses got privatised. It was a big topic in Glasgow just now, there was a deadline last Thursday, I hope a lot of yous filled it in, and that was to change it over to public ownership, hopefully. And then the bus fares went up 300% in 1984, '85. And it was really astounding what happened, and it was just normalised. And as I said, I find like, you know, a really big thing for the Assynt, Eigg, Gigha, and all that, was for a lot of us to look at ownership of land in our cities, because it just wasn't seen as a done thing. And that was the big thing about our presence in Pollok Park, you know, I eventually was attending meetings with National Trust etc. and all that. And just to bring that discussion and debate. I am a community gardener in Govanhill just now. I've got 500 fruit trees in the next three years. And the artist who got me in to do this hadn't realised all the improbabilities of dealing with housing association, who want to strim through and cut through everything. They want to cut trees down because they're in their way. They don't see all the health and environmental benefits of noise pollution and of clean air etc. And just for the therapeutic value of trees. So big subject but I hope that sort of covers what I felt is like the turning points historically. And that's giving credit to the elders who I have really learnt so much from.

[00:12:15]

Barbara Brayshay: *Absolutely and thank you. And the issue, this issue about land rights and land ownership is really a big issue in Scotland. And especially in relation to some of the moorlands, upland areas. Would you like to speak about your work John?*

John Simpson: Yes, I think Stuart hit the nail on the head for the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, enacted in '82 in Scotland, was probably the most pivotal piece of legislation for natural historians, because what it brought in was not only a clear set of guidelines, legislation for the populus, but for the police as well and enforcers, it scheduled what was regarded as being the most important species. And a lot of those species of course were raptors. And it really triggered the movement in Scotland of people who, up until one point, were really very focused on certain species and you had little groups, but suddenly there was a collective starting to form to start to look at what was probably the most persecuted series of species. And that was the raptors. To put it into some kind of context, a boy ornithologist growing up in Drumchapel, Glasgow,

heading out to Bearsden and Milngavie, a buzzard was the bird of the day. One buzzard. There's now thousands of buzzards, they're the most common diurnal raptor. Absolutely extraordinary. But I'll go back to the sixties and the seventies of the Derek Ratcliffe's and Roxburgh's and all these kind of people who did- Roy Dennis who is thankfully still alive today. These were the people who really set the foundation of what would be the Scottish Raptor Study Group and where it is now. What I have to say about the SRSG is it's a collective of amateurs, we all work in all sorts of different fields. My field was policing. So I was very fortunate to start off with a very small group of police officers at Tulliallan, the Scottish Police College and starting off the Police Wildlife Crime movement. I came in maybe about a year, once they had got themselves kicked off. So that blend of research, conservation and enforcement stems back for me to 1981 when that Act. Since been amended on several occasions and we'll talk about that. And I'm sure Lloyd's got something to say about the work that he's been doing. But it was a pivotal moment in Scottish natural history.

[00:15:02]

Barbara Brayshay: *Jo, would you like to add to that?*

Jo Pike: Mmm. There's some really interesting comments. So I came into the environmental sector in 2010. And I had previously worked, when I lived abroad, I had worked for a short time for an environmental charity, but I had been elsewhere in the charity sector. So in 2010 when I came in to the Scottish Wildlife Trust, quite fresh and not very knowledgeable about the huge range of issues that my colleagues were knowledgeable about, there were three key milestones that I think people were talking about at that time, that stand out in my mind. So one of them is that I joined the Scottish Wildlife Trust a year after the Scottish Beaver Trial had begun. And this was the first time that a full scientific trial, reintroduction of a mammal into the UK had ever taken place. It was the result of years and years of work from many, many people. The two lead partner organisations were ourselves, the Scottish Wildlife Trust, and the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland. And this was an opportunity to demonstrate to people how beavers are keystone species and ecosystem engineers, you know, these incredible animals could actually start making a difference on the ground. So that was one of the things that got people very excited and it got the press very excited and it got the public very excited. Another thing, you know, building on the comments that have been made

about the importance of legislation, the Marine Scotland Act came into force in 2010. And again there was a lot of celebration and a feeling that, gosh so much work has gone into this and finally we've reached this milestone. And I think so often in the world of nature conservation and the environmental movement more generally, lots of things happen unseen for many, many years before you actually get to a milestone that people recognise. And the third thing that I just want to mention was something that wasn't Scottish but was definitely starting to affect conversations people were having and was really interesting to me as a newcomer at that point to the environmental sector, because it was a report that had been produced in 2010 called 'The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity'. And it was causing people to talk about how we could use additional arguments to help people understand why a healthy natural environment is so critically important. And hopefully most of us here would agree that nature is our life support system, and all these kinds of things. But what was interesting about that is that it divided people, because people were very worried about talking about money and nature in the same sentence, and hang on a minute, no you can't monetise nature. But from where a lot of people were coming from who were starting to engage with this, it was another tool in the box. It was, 'Okay, look, even if you don't get the moral imperative or the intrinsic value of nature, there are economic reasons to protect it as well'. So I think there are subsequent milestones that followed that. But that was very interesting for me because it kind of demonstrated how everything is genuinely interconnected, and as a generalist rather than a specialist that appealed to my way of looking at the world I suppose, which was interesting.

[00:18:33]

Barbara Brayshay: *Great. So we've obviously got quite a strong focus here on nature conservation and biodiversity. And if we perhaps just move forward a little bit and talk about some of the key battlegrounds really. Because obviously there's the grouse moor raptor issues, or the issues of forestry. And, one of the things that I can think of, the impact of the oil industry, fish farming is another thing. I'm not quite sure of the history of how those issues evolved. So perhaps if we could go, step up from where we started off and go forward with- It's almost like what happened next.*

Stuart Housden: Well I think there's always a cause and effect. So following the Wildlife and Countryside Act there was quite a period of, sort of, the NCC reflecting and then they had to set about implementing it. And, as John says, it was a sort of phased

introduction. And that meant that Sites of Special Scientific Interest which were notified under this Act, they'd been there around since '49 I think, but they meant nothing to a landowner. You didn't have to tell anyone, you could go and plough it up, drain it, do whatever you like. If it was being built on, that was subject to planning. So about eleven, twelve percent of Scotland is an SSSI. These are the best places for nature. It's about eight, nine percent or something in England and Wales I think. And suddenly there was a big opposition to rolling these things out, because there was a requirement to do lots of new ones to meet the terms of EU Directives as well, which is why these things had been strengthened. And I'd had some involvement in both Birds and Habitats Directives, and things of that sort. But this caused a lot of opposition. Suddenly the NCC was noticed, and it brought it into the political dimension. And a lot of pressure was put on them. And because it was a GB thing, policy was sort of determined in London, and I went to one of the key meetings in London where they were rolling out some of these things. And I can imagine, you know, that the Scottish NFU, who I view very much as often opposing these sorts of things, and the landowners who were part of the House of Lords and so on, they didn't really have the sort of degree of control that they'd wanted. So that caused- you know, there were debates in the Isle of Bute, Orkney, Islay, all sorts of places like that. These conflicts sort of flared up in different places and each time it was the NCC doing something that the local farmers largely and landowners didn't want. So that led to the sort of pressure to bring what they did under control in Scotland. And you've got to remember that pre-devolution, agriculture, fisheries and forestry were pretty much devolved subjects. So they were never decided on a UK level, it was actually the EU that brought it closer together because it all had to work within the CAP, and things like that. So I think that created a tension that totally changed the structure eventually of how we do statutory nature conservation. And that brought positives but also negatives, which- it stopped the NCC's successors being courageous, because they're being sat on. And I think that's a bad thing. The independence isn't really there because the difference- they're very, very close. The Government has a complete control. And I think they run frightened of, you know, even of what their own science is telling them and their own data. And I think that's regrettable. But that's what campaigning NGOs are for, to sort of bring all that out into the open. And there was big casework, you know. There was cases in the courts, there was all these sorts of things that went on. And these fights have sort of determined things. The forestry one in particular, you know, it was a big change to both the way tax was levied on forestry, but also the conduct of the Forestry

Commission which, although a GB body, was based here in Edinburgh, or along the way in Edinburgh. And gradually that's been sort of unbundled again, I think, and we're seeing forestry doing things which are bad for biodiversity and nature, as well as good things. So I think there's - in these sorts of tensions - but I think it, you know, the growth of the National Trust taking over Mar Lodge, Scottish Wildlife Trust expanding its reserves, networks, RSPB getting Abernethy, which was where deer control was tackled fifteen, twenty years before everybody else, you know, and a lot of criticism, lots and lots of criticism about deer and deer management, and yet it was demonstrated it could work. So I think that's where Link came in. We gave each other lots of mutual support. We had the combined fire power. It made us all brigade and work together, which I think is important.

[00:24:03]

Barbara Brayshay: *Would you like to say something about Link and what that actually is?*

Stuart Housden: Well yes, it's probably about thirty-five, forty organisations now who all want to work to better protect the environment in its widest sense in Scotland. And there's working groups and so forth, there are some resources. But it coordinates approaches to make sure that we can gain access to the civil service, access to Ministers where appropriate. And we share opinions and views and try and work out common positions so that we can act in a more impactful way. Because prior to that there was a very easy sort of "divide and rule", you know: 'You're a favoured NGO so we'll talk to you. We're not going to talk to you because we have already decided you're going to tell us something we don't like', you know, you can't do that. So I think this collaborative working is fantastic. I'm not saying it was perfect, didn't solve everything. But it meant that it sort of evened up between the industry, COSLA, NFUS, Landowners, it sort of put us on a par with those interest groups and enabled us to have impact. And lots of good stuff happened as a consequence.

[00:25:19]

Barbara Brayshay: *Could you tell us what COSLA is for those of us who don't know?*

Stuart Housden: Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. Yes. It's basically where all planning and all the services of local authorities are discussed, yes.

Barbara Brayshay: *Just for the record so we know for the transcription.*

Stuart Housden: I have said too much. I'm shutting up now.

Barbara Brayshay: *No, no please, please. And John would you like to speak to that?*

John Simpson: Yes. Certainly from- We talked about the Wildlife and Countryside Act, and the natural history community felt, to be honest, that it wasn't well prepared, it wasn't that organised to tackle the threats that were coming our way. Even though we were collecting a lot of data, and I also act as the area's ornithological local recorder, so every bird record from Crainlarich to right down to the borders comes to myself, and I get to look through all of that and produce reports. But that's great. What are you going to do with that data? So a lot of activism, if you would call it that, in all honesty was individual, people would have maybe a local spat on a particular species. I was involved way back at the start with bean geese in Central Scotland, a bird that we thought was extinct in Scotland, and lo and behold living right under our nose was this population living in the most populated part of Scotland, so what were the bird watchers doing? So I ended up at a planning meeting, invading a meeting with a screen and an old Kodak carousel full of slides of these birds to prove that they actually existed. So that's the kind of activism and the level of activism there was at that time. And organisations obviously like Link now bring that collective weight and responsibility that comes with that. And I think that's very important that we've managed to get ourselves organised. Even within the Raptor Study Group we now have a communications officer, but most importantly we have a Parliamentary officer, taking all the problems that we've got for raptor species and other species and taking it straight into the heart of Holyrood. If you want to see, if you want to come out and see peregrines getting ringed, if you want to come out and see ospreys getting satellite tracked and all that kind of stuff, we've got a medium to keep them on board. So that collective responsibility, we have taken that principle to the University of Glasgow, we now have the Glasgow Peregrine Project which does ostensibly on a much smaller scale than Stuart's talking about, brings all the city's conservation, natural history bodies together to support one another. So that collectiveness, I think, is going to be the way forward for all of us. It's so financially

burdensome if you like to run, it must be, the Scottish Wildlife Trust. So the more that we can support one another logistically, financially, and just being there for one another, as far as I'm concerned, the better.

[00:28:21]

Barbara Brayshay: *And so you know that move towards collaboration, would you see that as being a turning point actually, thinking back, maybe 10 years ago even, maybe further back, you know, but this coming together as being really crucial for the sector.*

Jo Pike: Essentially I fully agree with that. The only caveat is that when I was looking through some of our archives at the Trust last year, because the charity was celebrating its sixtieth anniversary and I was looking in our library at some of the earliest documents when the charity was founded in 1964. And although we might like to think that some things have only started happening in the last few years, what struck me is that the ethos at the very beginning of the Scottish Wildlife Trust was very much about collaboration and understanding that different players have different roles to play and that we wanted to complement those and didn't want to duplicate or get in the way. It was very outward looking and very thoughtful, which I think has become kind of part of the DNA, not only of the Scottish Wildlife Trust, I do really think that collaboration, as Stuart says, and collective action is massively important. And one of the things that I noticed when I came into the environment sector is that, perhaps because there are, well many people coming from a scientific background but kind of everybody with some kind of connection to nature, whether it's a specialist one or not, instinctively understands that we're all part of something bigger. And because that's the cause that unites us it's obvious that we've got to collaborate, that there's absolutely no way that we can achieve these things alone. So I think there have been more and more mechanisms coming into place to enable that collaboration. So maybe the ethos has always been there but perhaps we've been better at putting it into action in more recent times, through- Scottish Environment Link is a really good example.

[00:30:30]

Barbara Brayshay: *Right. Danny, we've talked quite a lot here about NGOs working all around these issues of biodiversity and conservation. You were talking much more about sort of the grassroots*

movement. And would you like to say something more about that? Because there are a lot of other issues that we haven't really touched on yet, thinking about-

Danny Alderslowe: I think it has really evolved, because there was a stage- I mean I attended, took part in the Free State, Pollok Free State, Bollin Valley which is runway three in Manchester, and Newbury, etc. And yes all these things. And there as a shift when, like when the Free State stopped and they were going to go ahead with the motorway. And there was a section of activists, 'Right, where do we go now? What have we got to protest against now?' And there's a quote from Colin Mcleod, it says, 'We've shown them what we're against. Now let's show them what we're for.' And when I was in Europe cycling around, working on organic farms, which is a great way to educate yourself and learn how to cook and everything, and just meet all these sort of environmental needs of Europe etc. I learned about permaculture. So permaculture, if you don't know, is a worldwide sustainable solution format that people study. I've got at least two design degrees in permaculture, and it's like, so like say if I want to design an area in Glasgow that's not an area for cars, it's an area for people, and it's about like, you know- Jo you mentioned, economic reasons to support nature. So I find permaculture gets that balance. Because what I have found fantastic about me being from a working class background, I met loads of lovely middle class people who care about nature, and you know, it's all very much divide and rule, you find, in society and you're, 'Oh they're like that and they're like that'. Do you know what I mean? And I'm just like- So permaculture I think is a great thing to look into, unites people but unites design because it's about local and global. So there's all that think local, act global. One of my favourite ones is 'minimum input for maximum output'. Now that goes for hosting, running something like this, that it doesn't take a lot to organise this, but what we get from this is a lot, lot more. So the same way I would do if I'm meeting a group of volunteers, if we're going to do some raised beds at the Govanhill pantry in Govanhill. So I think like it's really changed positively where activism is just as much growing food in your local school, helping local projects, supporting the local raptors groups, etc. than it is locking yourself on to, like I did once, a nuclear convoy up in Balloch, do you know what I mean? I talk a lot about the psychology of things, in the sense of, like, there was a lot people by your side in the nineties, 'Yeah we are right and they're all wrong.' Do you know what I mean? And again I think that was part of the divide and rule rhetoric where they were really missing out. And people like you mentioned earlier on that have got

valuable tools that you don't have etc. and all that. And I think like with permaculture, you know, it's a worldwide movement. And a lot of it came from sort of the Aboriginal design of life that feeds into modern day life, you know. And one other one I want to mention which was a big catalyst and turning point, I think, which happened overseas, was the Rainbow Warrior. You know that was really big news and for a lot of my younger generation at the time in the eighties, that got a lot of people joining Greenpeace etc. But shifting at the present time, you know activism, again lots of people don't find out what's going on until maybe it's passed the legislation. But a lot of people just don't find out what's going on. Scotland, our cities, rural towns, you know, I set this project up, they've all got food growing projects. You know, they've all got all these amazing charities, all the amazing wealth of volunteers and people learning skills through attending permaculture courses etc. We're all with Propagate which is a really massive thing as well. And we need positivity, especially with all the news headlines we get just now. But sadly I don't think we've got enough politicians that can reflect positivity. You know they're not really intertwined with it. I was a councillor in Glasgow for five years, from 2007 to 2012, and I found it really scary and really negative, you know, they didn't see it on par with the environment. Whereas like I would wear Jo's hat and I would say, 'Well if we designed our,-' and people would say, 'Oh there's reasons why we don't get this Danny.' I would say, 'There's reasons for-' The police used to give me the worst 16 to 25 year olds, they would say, in Glasgow, and they would come to my project in Govanhill which was food growing and woodworking. For three days we would plant and wood. And they're often gangs etc. etc. And then for two days, thanks to this design, I had the funding to take them up the hills. We had, and this is from the medical people that were studying our project, we had an eighty, ninety percent turnover in these people's lives. The last ten percent we couldn't get because they were so traumatised from their horrific upbringing. But the eighty, ninety percent, we had to fight for funding every year and yet we were ticking these boxes and the boxes, Jo, that would fix the amount of money that we spent on poor health. We'd fix them the amount of money we spent in antisocial behaviour and vandalism and violence. And all the ripples that come from that in people's working class lives. I don't think that's pushed enough politically. But I think here at this table's there's people that are aware of things I'm seeing here, but the ripples are there, and that's why I'm still a very positive thinking person, we can make change even in these what I would say dire times. Okay. Is that all right?

[00:36:31]

Barbara Brayshay: *That's great. Thank you. That's really great. Is there anyone else on the panel who would like to contribute to- Yes, Zarina.*

Zarina Ahmad: Yes, I think it's just leading on from what Danny was saying because thinking about the history and the movement, some turning points. And it's like where I kind of came in, and I came in round about the same time as Jo, around 2008, 2009. And the reason was because there was a shift from it being a climate science and data space to thinking about social impact. So it was like, how are people getting involved? And that connection between people and nature was a really interesting space. And again, and I, similar to you Danny, I kind of came from a psychology background, so I was really interested in that space. And it was like that connection of people being part of ecosystem and not being removed from it and doing to the ecosystem. And that was, for me, that was a crucial turning point in that movement, in the environmental movement was when people were part of that conversation. And then the second movement, wearing my other hat, which is about thinking about equality, the Equality Act in 2010, and again it came in 2010, thinking about the Equality Act and which people were getting involved, which people were being excluded, like you said it was a very white middle class space in the environmental sector. And it was about how do we make it more inclusive, how do we not exclude people from that. So thinking about the Equality Act. So that was again a very crucial point. And then the third one was the death of George Floyd, for me, so that was what five years ago now. And so the Black Lives Matter movement, that really started to connect things more, like the structural and systemic inequalities in the environmental movement. So thinking about capitalism and colonialism, extraction, exploitation. So the conversation changed. For me there was a huge shift in the whole environmental sector when we started to link it with bigger systemic changes. So I just wanted to highlight those points.

[00:38:45]

Danny Alderslowe: Can I just give a statistic? You've reminded- Just two days ago there was a brilliant presentation from the orchards project that we are doing in the South Side of Glasgow. It was by an artist, an amazing girl, Simone. 0.83% of minorities are involved in the green industry. And by the way it's not much higher for working class people. And

it's just through, you know, be it our education or just where you are from, 'that's not for you, you don't do that'. And like the same thing I mentioned, back in the nineties when I'd good comrades round me saying, 'Oh Dan is that you off to join your middle class friends?' So again nature and environment are associated with- And that's a legacy isn't it of education, but it's like, it's where you live. And the thing is when I meet- I have got so many friends from all round Asia and Africa, they all come from food growing backgrounds, growing what they build their houses with. These are skills that we are like spend a lot of money to go on workshops with. People have got just so many skills like that. But it's a silent thing that we really need to keep opening up, that you're doing, which is great.

[00:39:45]

Zarina Ahmad: No, it stems from like colonialism really and capitalism.

Danny Alderslowe: Yes, yes.

Zarina Ahmad: And it's like when we make those connections then we can start talking about environmental justice.

Barbara Brayshay: *And that sort of links into a lot of land ownership, and land issues in Scotland. It's not just about, you know, the global south or something like that, it's very relevant in Scotland isn't it? And Lloyd, I noticed you wanted to say something.*

Lloyd Austin: Yes. Reflecting on the key moments, I would endorse the comment that devolution was hugely significant. I mean it, 1999 is about midway in your period from 1970s to now. And pre-devolution and post-devolution the environmental sector and the environmental issues have been handled very differently. And obviously we're going to cover that quite a lot more. But I think there are other things, almost of a similar constitutional basis, that has been an impact. Stuart hinted at it, that the Birds and Habitats Directive came from Europe. Well so did lots of other things, Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Common Agriculture Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy. So good and bad came from Europe and of course we went in in the seventies and then more recently we've come out. And so, and coming out has had an impact as well because the whole post Brexit

arrangements, the Scottish Government's alleged alignment with EU standards, I say alleged because they're loud at claiming it but they're not very good at delivering it. The creation of Environmental Standards Scotland and things like that are the more recent key moments of being linked to Europe. So there was the going in and the impact of Europe and then there was the coming out and the impact of coming out. I'd endorse all the other comments about the '81 Act and the Flow Country, Forestry, SNH etc. But I think the big issues and the big cases are quite interesting because forestry was a big issue. In terms of cases, I think there has been a lot of energy issues over the years. First of all oil and gas in the North Sea, which was a big issue in the seventies and eighties as it was developed. And it's now a big issue of course in the climate agenda as it declines and how it declines and how you deliver a just transition and so on. In the eighties or nineties, I think it was, the whole nuclear Torness campaign was a big one. In terms of nature and planning, Stuart mentioned the funicular. I think it was Danny mentioned Harris Super Quarry, Lingerbay, was a big one. I was at the public inquiry for nine months, which was an excitement. And more recently of course we had the big issue with a golf course in Aberdeenshire, and the owner of that's come back to us recently as well.

Barbara Brayshay: *Those are the things I was thinking of.*

Lloyd Austin: So all of those issues, I mean some of them were "won" in inverted commas. Some of them were "lost" in inverted commas. But I mean there is no super quarry on Harris, which is great. Roineabhal is a nice mountain you can still walk up. There is a funicular, not that it works, or does anything useful for anybody. But don't ask.

Stuart Housden: As predicted.

Lloyd Austin: As predicted. So those are key things. I'll just end up by saying that devolution was important because if you look at the environmental legislation that Scottish Parliament has passed since '99, quite a lot of it has improved the '81 Act. So we've had the Nature Conservation Act, the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act, the Wildlife Management Act etc.

Barbara Brayshay: *And Net Zero targets.*

Lloyd Austin: Yes, and beyond nature we've had Water Environment, the Marine Bill, three Climate Change Acts, and so forth. And I'd end by reiterating the comments about collaboration, because I think the environmental movement's influence on the post devolution legislation has been considerably enhanced by the working through Link. And working together through Link. I was on the Scottish Environment Link board for a while in one of my, in my old job when I was with RSPB, and have worked with Link since. And there's one thing that I think the MSPs like, is a united view from the NGO sector, and they like Link for that reason. And that doesn't mean that the individual Wildlife Trusts or RSPB or Raptor Study Group person isn't involved in giving that united view, there often are those people giving that united view. But the fact that it is a united view backed by colleague organisations, is something that the member of the Parliament and the committees listen to more than if it was just one-offs and people who have not kind of come to an agreement beforehand so to speak. I'll stop there.

[00:45:22]

Barbara Brayshay: *Ric or Jess, have you got anything that you'd like to add?*

Jess Pepper: Just to add to that endorsement of Scottish Environment Link being established being such a pivotal moment, because on some of the big issues which have been mentioned, there was already an awareness that people needed to collaborate in order to achieve results. And especially with limited resources and the decision making in London, that meant that in those days, you know, it took two or three people to get together to take a long sleeper train journey, back and forward, just maybe to move one amendment on a Bill and to lobby before it, even to have one conversation with a minister. And now to hear, you know, John's story about how the Scottish Raptor Study Group can access through a Parliamentary officer and talk with Parliament, that's just a complete change. But in the eighties, obviously I was growing up in the environment movement, so just going into my teens when Scottish Environment Link was established. But I remember that being such a pivotal moment. And I think it's important to mark it because it's informed so much since, because that collaboration, the outcomes, the willingness of people to come together as a collective, and to put aside just individual logos and agendas, and be collaborative, and learning from the other campaigns that have been moved as well. So I think that- and Scotland's a good size do that really well and to amplify voice. And that's probably informed and extended into what's now the broader

climate coalition, and probably taking some of the earlier learning, bringing the trade unions into that as well. So, yes it's just a really important moment I think.

[00:47:18]

Barbara Brayshay: *Thank you. Ric.*

Ric Lander: Yes sure. So speaking from Friends of the Earth Scotland, who are sort of official troublemakers in Scottish Environment Link, so it's very interesting hearing these perspectives. I've been working at Friends of the Earth Scotland for eleven years, have occasionally represented the organisation on some of these coalitions and things like that. But I think the essential nature of collaboration and collective action is very, very clear for us at Friends of the Earth Scotland, but the question is who are your priorities for doing that collaboration collective action with, and trying to bridge these different worlds. Because, as Zarina mentioned, you were talking about prioritising the social impact and seeking that intersection between social and environmental rights and justice and so on, this is a key- something that comes up when you look across this history over the decades. Now I spent some time digging through our archives, but I'm not really going to speak to that because it's not my history to do so. But I saw Kevin Dunion's book being banded around, and he talks very passionately in the 1990s about Friends of the Earth Scotland's work, working in working class towns in the central belt and supporting and connecting up and joining people who were struggling against really nasty bits of environmental pollution that had been dumped on their doorsteps, and former quarries being filled with toxic landfill and this kind of thing. And building those links for people between the crap that's happening on their doorstep and the patterns that are appearing across the country and globally. And this kind of work has borne fruit a number of times, I think, over the history of different organisations and movements. And to take probably one of the most acute examples for us, it was in the 2010s during the anti-fracking campaign, which at its peak there were groups popping up in many of these central belt communities that would not consider themselves to be environmental activists at all, whatsoever, firmly rejecting the notion of onshore drilling and pollution coming to their neighbourhood. But through that people were building those connections to kind of global movements. We worked with the Ethnic Minority Environmental Network through the 2010s. And more recently we've, not more recently in fact, over sort of the same time period, a lot of patient work to build connections with

trade unions, industrial trade unions, and also unorganised oil and gas workers, to hear their view on what they want to see in a transition away from fossil fuels. And that has been such fruitful work, to do that bridge building. But it's patient, it kind of takes time, takes a while to be visible as well. And these have been the kind of collaborations which you have to be, I think, quite- from the point of view of sitting in that environmental circle, you know, like in this room today, does require a bit of vision and ambition to kind of step out of that space and go and speak with people who do not see this as a natural home for you. And just to take one example to finish with, it's Pride tomorrow in Aberdeen. And Aberdeen Pride is the last Pride in the UK that still has sponsorship from oil and gas companies. And a number of queer LGBT people have been organising a campaign to remove that sponsorship tomorrow. They've been successful doing this kind of thing in other places. But that has led to all kinds of difficult conversations in a community, which is under attack and lacking funding and support from Government and other places, about what you do when industry is opening a hand and kind of reject that. So often when we do reach out of our comfort zone and we find ourselves working with people who are facing a lot of deep challenges when they want to campaign for environmental rights in their own spaces, but by pushing through that and working with people we do really transformative things. And that has happened many times over this history I think.

[00:52:04]

Jo Pike: Can I just mention two small things that haven't been brought up so far in terms of important moments. And I guess it's about young people and their form of activism. So I think the School Strikes for the Climate were an interesting-

Barbara Brayshay: *I was going to mention that but I thought we were running out of time.*

Jo Pike: So just so that we don't overlook that one. I can remember seeing them all coming down the Royal Mile, standing at the bottom, you know. My son was among them, and listening to him talking about it afterwards and the difference between how he reflected on things he'd learned in school versus what he'd heard the speakers say at the end the School Strike, that was really interesting because they landed in a very different way. But also I think, you know, in terms of divestment from fossil fuels, the sort of

movement among university students to call upon their institutions to divest, specifically, I think has probably raised awareness as its greatest benefit.

[00:53:02]

Barbara Brayshay: *I think we've sort of run out of time, because we haven't had time to talk about Climate Camps either which is another part of the movement. But perhaps we can pick up on that later.*

Lloyd Austin: Could I just add one very last thing, partly stimulated by what Ric said, but one of the recent trends has been looking at environmental issues through a rights lens. And there's a recent NGO called the Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland, which I'm lucky enough to Chair. But it grew out from a Link working group and it was initially a collaboration that involved people from Friends of the Earth Scotland, RSPB and other Link members. But it joined up with people from local communities and ethnic minorities and so forth. And it's been working on environmental justice and campaigning for, and providing a service to, local groups and communities who want to challenge environmental injustices in their communities and so forth. And are hoping to hold the Scottish Government to account for delivering a statutory right, a human right to a healthy environment, which they've kind of promised but keep delaying. But I think that kind of linking between the sort of environmental agenda of reducing carbon emissions, protecting nature etc., and the rights of disadvantaged communities and so forth has been one of the things that's certainly emerged and gone mainstream in the last decade.

Barbara Brayshay: *I think that's one of the things that's really emerged from our conversation here actually, as one of the key moments or key turning points in the development of the environmental activism in Scotland.*

Ric Lander: Can I add very briefly to that. It's really important in the purposes of the UK-wide study to understand that Scot's law, the existence of Scot's law shapes and defines its difference between England and Scotland. And this is why we need organisations like the Environmental Rights Centre to interpret and deal with and challenge law in Scotland in a way that you can't do as UK-wide work. And that is a little piece of this whole oxygen which I think affects the air that we breathe.

Barbara Brayshay: *You'll maybe have a chance to talk about that in the next session actually.*

John Simpson: I think that's when it will come to fore won't it, yes.

Barbara Brayshay: *Yes I think- Okay well thank you very much everyone for your contributions.*

[Audio ends: 00:55:52]

2) Session B: What has been the impact of devolution on the environmental movement?

Oli Mould: *Good to go Toby?*

Toby Butler: *Yes we're good.*

Oli Mould: *Great. Well thank you again everyone for making it such an interesting first session. I'm Oli by the way, I'm one of the co-investigators on the project. One of the key issues that clearly came out of it was devolution, which I think we'd like to spend a bit of time talking in this next session. Just to shake things up a bit, as you can see there's different people taking the first stab at it. So I'll handover to Jess. But just before we do, very quickly, I think one of the things we perhaps didn't mention at the beginning, which is worth just helping the transcribers, is if we can say each other's, or say your name before you start, just so the transcriber knows who's speaking, if I haven't said it. So Jess. So you don't have to say it because I've said it now, so you can- So then devolution, how did it affect what you do and talk us through the sort of ways in which it's such a vital part of the history.*

Jess Pepper: So as we've kind of touched on in the previous session, the shift to devolution was a game changer in terms of the landscape that people were operating in, from the distant Westminster decision making to now having the Parliament amongst the folk, the people, at the top of High Street in Edinburgh. And the MSPs having to walk across the street, literally through the crowds, to get to the decision making chamber. And of course it was set up on the principles of being open and transparent and accessible and participative, which is really important as well. So rather than having these long journeys to go and communicate one point from a whole collective of interest, it was now possible for people to advocate their own voices directly. And that was a game changer for people to raise their voices and their ambition of what we could be doing in Scotland or what we could be doing better in Scotland. And there were some really important milestones on the way, I think it emerged over that- So at the time I was employed as one of the first Parliamentary officers for Scottish Environment Link, so for that collective. The Parliamentary office had been set up before I came, and then I was one of the early folk in that role. But of course Parliamentary officers were being set up across different organisations and sectors as well, so there was a whole choir of different voices being heard directly from the people for the first time. And that opened up, yes, lots of channels of communication and started to inform the Parliament which had its

own library and research service as well, which is informing the debate within the Parliament, and the political parties as well, some of whom took it upon themselves to really review where they were at with environment and understanding of nature and climate stuff at the time. So yes that was a bit of a- that was a game changer.

Oli Mould: *Ric have you got any thoughts on that?*

Ric Lander: Yes. I mean so I arrived in Scotland in- sorry I should have a clear answer to that, I don't know the date. But it's something like 2006, and I was involved in environmental and social justice campaigns from that time. And did work professionally in the environmental sector from about 2010 onwards. And so I was very much in the aftermath of devolution, so it's like where my experience comes in. And there was a real feeling in Edinburgh, but I suspect this doesn't translate, but definitely in Edinburgh in the people that surround, in the NGO world, there was a sense of pride, you know, that we had this new institution that was designed to be-, things were going to better, things were going to work better, and we had a Government that was listening to people. There was a reasonable amount of flow of exchange of ideas and information between civil society and Government. This was the feeling in the air, you know, I'm not saying how things were. But it felt like that when you went to public meetings and spoke to people, that 'We can solve problems because, yes, the minister lives next door, and oh it doesn't matter because the MSP is actually going to be at a meeting at six o'clock this evening and we'll just go and we'll chat to him there and we'll kind of figure it out, and it's all kind of fine and cosy and good.' And certainly in Edinburgh anyway that that led to- there was this kind of sense of optimism about things. And I think that I do have a sense in speaking with people in bigger countries, Scotland's a small country right and you put an institution like that in a relatively small country, it does tend towards this kind of cosiness, like everyone kind of knows everyone. And a lot of us know each other, but more than that, a lot of us have been involved in each other's organisations, been on each other's boards. And I think you can get a kind of group think that comes out of that, and a fear of stepping outside, and that's the opposite of that collaboration that was talked about in the previous session, that it can be a bit of a suppressant against experimentation. Constantly over the last twenty years, when I speak to people in London, two things amaze me. One of them is that none of them know each other. There's people doing all this mad stuff and they don't know even, I was like, 'Oh did you

know that someone two miles away from you just did this really cool protest?' or whatever. And they were like, 'No. And I don't care either,' kind of thing. It was just like 'Why do I need to work with them? We had 100 people come to a public meeting, we're just going to go and do it and whatever, and I don't care', kind of thing. We can't do that in Edinburgh, whatever, the town's too small. So like it's harder to experiment in a small country, I think, sometimes because there's just that critical mass of people is not so available to you. So that was a slight difference I felt like being in Scotland. So there's a positive and a negative side to it. But being there in the aftermath of devolution, yes there was that kind of sense of optimism about, the cosiness was a good thing and we could kind of make that work. But one of the things I wanted to speak about in this piece was my feeling and impression about these kind of waves of interest that we have in climate and environmentalism and the Scottish Parliament's role in that. And when I came to Scotland as I say in 2005, 2006, the G8 had just been in town, which was a huge deal, and there was a big, big spike in interest in climate between 2005 and 2010. It kind of came crashing down with the Copenhagen climate summit. But between that period of time and the amount of community groups propping up and the interest we were getting in the press and from MSPs and so on was vastly greater than what came afterwards. And we won material things from that. So the coal fired power stations were finished in that period of time. That was when we won the campaign against Hunterston. I say 'we', I wasn't very involved in that, but I was involved in campaigning against open cast coal mines, which was a huge wave of new open casts that came around that time. And the Climate Bill was won in that period. Really important things that came out of that spike of interest. And Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, which has been mentioned, exists from that time. And then things kind of died away again and we had this wave of cuts and austerity coming from the UK Government. And the climate campaigns kind of burned themselves out a bit, was the feeling. But in 2014 we had the Independence Referendum. Generated a huge amount of interest in anything civil society, anything about- And democratising our communities and visionary social change. And we, I would say that Friends of the Earth Scotland and the community groups we work with, we won the fracking campaign off the back of that. And that was very much the feeling that that energy went into that. And other things were won at Scottish Parliament level, for example the community buy-outs and so on. And we got new organisations as well. So *The Ferret* is such an important organisation. *The Ferret* dates from that interest in going, whoa, whoa, journalism is like dying in Scotland. And people are coming together

and proposing a solution to that. So we got a new organisation. Loads of other new organisations that came out of the Independence Referendum, which is, you know, a uniquely Scottish experience, it would not have happened if it wasn't for devolution. And there have been other waves since. COP26 and the youth strikes, this came in a period where we were able to use some of that energy to challenge the oil and gas industry, which has had that campaign having quite a long half-life with the Rosebank court case being won just a few months ago. The UK Government, I feel confident in saying, has reneged on almost every single pledge it made in an election which was like so many weeks ago. I mean it's incredible how quickly they seem to have u-turned on everything. Except this one policy, which is to freeze North Sea oil and gas fields. And I still don't really understand how that happened but that is a win, you know, that was something we materially campaigned for off the back of the energy of the youth strikes and COP26. So this has been my perspective as someone who has been involved in direct action groups and community groups in my spare time and at Friends of the Earth Scotland in my professional work, that some of these uniquely Scottish spikes in interest, it's been about how we can harness that to make some change.

[00:10:41]

Oli Mould: *Thank you. Jess, just in terms of, you mentioned there the different ways in which the very broad political landscape changed for the better. Being able to get on a train for example. From an institutional perspective, I mean the Climate Café that you're working at now presumably you joined after devolution. Are there instances that you can think of, or examples that you can give, from your working life on the institutional level, where there has been a positive impact or indeed a different impact that you can pinpoint to a result of devolution?*

Jess Pike: Yes, I think quite quickly after devolution, so part of the structure of the Scottish Parliament, we've heard about the principles and the accessibility, but the engine room was the committee system. And obviously clearly we had a more diverse chamber because of the way of voting as well. And there's not an awful lot of scrutiny from the media on what happens within committees. But actually an awful lot happens within the committees and big decisions are made. And you see a bit more collaborative working across parties as well. And that kind of opened up other opportunities. Early on there was almost a fresh sense in some cases within the civil service of a different kind of

culture as well, where there would be more collaboration with external stakeholders to develop legislation rather than just arriving at the door of the Parliament and putting it in, and having the battle in the building. There would be more collaboration in shaping that legislation. So really, you know, strong pieces of legislation would come to the Parliament in a much more collaborative way. For example the transposition of the Water Framework Directive, the Water Environment and Water Services Bill, which was mentioned in the last session. Probably the Freedom of Information Act was part of that. Friends of the Earth Scotland were very involved in shaping that as well. There were new- you know, for the first time the petitioning system in the Scottish Parliament opened up a completely different way of individuals even being able to access the building and the Parliament itself. So the Land Reform Act, when it had its first iteration and the draft was put to the Scottish Parliament, was met with quite a lot of horror from a lot of stakeholders across Scotland. And that motivated a massive push to have a petition, and that was handed into Parliament by 12,000 of us. I think there were 12,000 people, one of the first, if not the first e-petitions that was put to the Parliament as well. And it was delivered by every way of accessing the Parliament, horseback, ramblers, canoed across the Forth, all the rest of it. So it was a much more kind of visual and visible way of engaging. And there became a trend after that of the pieces of environmental legislation being stronger, in Scotland definitely that seemed to be recognised as something which was happening. And then you get the fun of the UK different nations leaning on each other to push a bit further. And so that, yes, that definitely became part of the culture. I think we've lost a bit of that freshness and openness of the civil service to collaborate. And almost some of the themes which were coming up earlier about that systemic reluctance to shift and to hold the status quo I think we almost-, it's not as visible as what goes on in the chamber and the Parliament. But the reticence to move sometimes is certainly something which has become much more of the culture, I would say, in the last decade, if not a bit before that. But in those early days there was almost a freshness of approach and a lack of fear to collaborate and then stronger, more inclusive pieces of work coming to the building. But the Climate Act, defining moment. Because there was a huge,- through the Stop Climate Chaos coalition, an awful lot of engagement right across Scotland. There was a sense of what the people wanted. It wasn't just the members of NGOs, it was the people, you know, folk in the street and getting involved. And then as things started to slow in the delivery of that important framework, the children and the young people taking the lead. And I

think sometimes we miss the children who were out there. I was the sandwich carrier for two of them who were the first two outside Holyrood with another, one of them six and one of them nine, and they were joined by an eight year old who sat in the freezing cold in January 2019 for hours, and then were joined by others. And of course in September 2019, 20,000 children and families and supporters all walked, the young people all walked down to the Parliament. And coming round that corner I remember my children's faces, when they saw, wow, 20,000. The image I have from January was three big policeman with a lot of vests and weapons and two tiny little children sitting on the freezing concrete. And then coming round the corner to be greeted by this colour and fest. And a bit of nervousness when my six year old decided to, you know, just get up. The Children's Commissioner, and this is where we start to get into the rights stuff, was really supporting the children and young people and advocating for their rights and seeing themselves as human rights defenders, and invited those three onto the stage to join them for just an acknowledgement of where were at in this moment. And the feedback at that time was that's what shifted the targets for the 2019 legislation, to shift it to seventy-five percent by 2030. So yes, that was a huge moment. Yes I was a wee bit anxious when the six year old went up unprepared and just, just went for it with the mic. Yes, enjoyed his moment.

[00:16:46]

Oli Mould: *Wow, that's brave- my six year old doing that. Does anyone want to respond to anything that these two have said?*

Zarina Ahmad: Yes, can I just-

Oli Mould: *Zarina speaking, sorry.*

Zarina Ahmad: Yes, the other part I think is the devolution powers, what powers does Scotland have over UK Government? And one of them was environmental policies. So them being, having ambitious targets and wanting to be like leaders was a huge thing for Scottish Government. And what it meant was that there was, at that time, it felt to me very much like, we need everybody on board, we need as much help as what we can get. And there was a feeling of like the Ministers didn't always know what they were doing. So there was this like space to experiment a little bit, or be brave, I suppose be brave

might be the right word, to be braver. Which I feel now unfortunately it's kind of like, it's been suppressed, it's been pushed out of them, that braveness that they had then. And it's a shame that we don't have it now. But, yes, I think being able to hold our own strategies and policies and push forward on them was really important.

[00:17:57]

Oli Mould: *Great. Lloyd did you want to-*

Lloyd Austin: Yes a few things about the impact of devolution. As I said earlier, devolution came midway through the period we're considering. And it's important to remember what it was like before devolution, as Stuart gave us a few examples of earlier. But back then the Scottish Office, as it was, was part of the UK Government. But we must not forget that the Scottish Office was a form of devolution. It was administrative devolution, it wasn't political or legislative devolution, it was administrative devolution. So things like environment, planning, agriculture, forestry, fisheries were all the responsibility of the Scottish Office. The Ministers with responsibility for it in the Scottish Office were in London most of the week. And in the summer when Westminster was on recess they were sent off on Highlands and Islands tours to open dairies and things like that. So they were essentially-, the Scottish Office was run by a small group of senior civil servants who used to meet with their other pals in Edinburgh. And it was very difficult for environmentalists or communities or local, any campaigners for social and environmental matters to get access, let alone get listened to. I mean that doesn't mean that good things didn't happen, because of course the Wildlife and Countryside Act happened. So there were ways of good things happening, often originating from Europe of course. So after devolution those kind of aspects, as Jess has indicated, of things being nearer and more open and more transparent, more lobbyable if I could put it that way, were improvements. And I think, as Zarina indicated, it's important to know what powers were in the Scottish Parliament. Because environment and the other policies we're interested in were all devolved. But the Scottish Parliament didn't have responsibility for foreign affairs, defence, social security and so on. So they actually had more time to spend on the environment in one way. So you know that's one aspect to bear in mind. The other aspect to bear in mind, which Jess hinted at, was the electoral system. Because obviously since devolution we have only had one Parliament

where there was an overall majority. So in every other Parliament there was either a coalition or a minority Government. And it's easier to lobby and make changes if you've got a junior coalition partner or a minority Government who has to do deals with other parties. Because the junior coalition partner or the other parties can actually have influence, which they can't at Westminster in a majority situation. And so one of the ways in which we made improvements to quite a lot of Bills was through that mechanism whereby the small parties in committees or the junior coalition partner or the opposition would gang up and support amendments against the Government. Because, notwithstanding all the benefits we've described, the civil service was still the civil service and ministers were still following civil service advice most of the time. And we have to bear that in mind. But nevertheless there were times when they wanted to be different to the rest of the UK, so there was a couple of things, the Water Environment Act, the Environmental Assessment Act which was the implementation of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, and the Climate Change 2019 Act, were all Acts where they decided positively to go further than other parts of the UK and do better from an environmental point of view. But of course there are other areas where they've decided to do the opposite, so mustn't forget that. And sometimes they just wanted to be different for the sake of being different. So Scottish national parks have a completely different constitutional structure to the English national parks. But of course the fact that we have Scottish national parks is a result of devolution, and that was one of the first Acts, the National Parks Act 2000, which partly is because the then Labour Party was part of the first Scottish Executive as they called it then, promised national parks because national parks Scotland had been excluded from the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which set up the English ones, and they'd been excluded because of the influence of landowners in the House of Lords in 1949. And therefore one of the biggest differences with devolution is Acts of the Scottish Parliament do not have to go through the House of Lords. My final comment was about access, and Jess commented about catching MSPs in the street, which is actually one of the things that was the benefit of the temporary accommodation, the temporary Parliament at the top of the High Street, because their offices were on the opposite side of the road to the debating chamber. Whereas when they built the new Parliament down at the other end of the High Street, of course their offices and the chamber and the committee rooms are all behind security barriers, so you can't catch them crossing a road anymore. And actually another thing is, I think Ric hinted that they've kind of gone into their shell a bit more

than they used to in the early days. The enthusiasm for being different and pushing the boat out has disappeared, and so forth. But who know, next year there's an election and irrespective of which parties do well or don't do well, there will be a big turnover and a lot of new members of the Parliament because of the number of MSPs from all parties that have said they're going to stand down this time round. So there will be quite a big new intake. Now whether that will be new enthusiasm or new inexperience we'll wait and see.

[00:24:53]

Oli Mould: *Thank you. Just picking on something that you mentioned Ric, I think it's important that we get other people's opinions on this as well, you mentioned how everyone seems to know each other in the Scottish environment. If Chris Church was here, one of the other members of our team, I can hear him talking about the ways in which slightly before-, sort of in the late eighties, the environmental movement in the UK bifurcated, sort of split a little bit, where you had slightly more institutional settings and then you had the more activist-on-the-ground settings. One of the things that he-, because we've been writing about this, is that the communication between those two kind of arms, if you like, hasn't always been the best. But if in Scotland, if people know each other more, is there a sense that actually on-the-ground activists have to work more hand in hand.*

[00:25:50]

Danny Alderslowe: Yes. I'd say there's frustration but in the general sense that people are so busy with their lives, you know. If you've got a family, if you've got, you know what I mean, hard times being and living in a sort of- So I'm using the term working class just to give you a sense of my background, but I despise like class divisions that people push. So I just feel like, when you mentioned Link, I'm just like that: 'Oh yes, I was seeing those emails for years', I never got to a Link meeting. And there was SEED as well. Can people say what the acronym was for SEED? Scottish Environmental-

Lloyd Austin: Education Development I think.

Danny Alderslowe: You know what I mean? Just all these great things but I was never going to get there because I was twenty-five hours in the community and raising my family etc. and all that. So there's that frustration. So if I can just stay on that then, on

this topic of devolution. Big issues, you know, with people not engaged in politics and the low vote. So when I get voted in in the Southside of Glasgow for this local authority, it was like thirty-three percent of the vote. And while everybody was all celebrating, I was like feet on the ground saying, 'This is pretty sad man,' do you know what I mean, 'that hardly any people have voted.' But I just felt the egos roundabout me, sorry, that's the most negative thing I'll say today, were just like, 'Yes, I'm in!'. And within a few weeks they're like, 'Right, when can I be an MP?' 'When can I be an MSP?' And they were forgetting about the- do you know what I mean? And I'll carry on with that branch then, I was really interested Ric when you said about the Scot's Law thing. Because there's a real split, an undemocratic split, between the Scottish Government ruling and what these local authorities get up to. And that's really difficult, I feel, where on a local- I've been in the City Chambers there, and the planning was one of the most depressing things I would go to, when planning decisions were getting made. And in my own community – it's been a big topic recently about the tree at the Hadrian's Wall and the tree at the pub down in London etc – so there was a big tree in Victoria Road, a lime tree which was about 120 years old because I got it counted and found it, when it was left there. And just like that, Lidl took it away. And they took down all these other trees so they could get their car parks in, for the Kentucky and the McDonald's were going to move in. And these roads we're told were going to get emptied because the M74 was going to take all that traffic. Whereas like every study in the world could tell you, more roads, more traffic. So there's that divide, where I was getting this great news, I did like the devolution and things and all that because there was more money filtering through thanks to the Climate Act to projects like ours on the ground, but there's that scary divide of who's making the laws here? And now we've witnessed Westminster overruling the bottle recycling, which was popular in other places, with the Menie overruling by Alex Salmond with the golf course. You know so I just, I'm just concerned about that. And I've just moved back from Galloway and there was this whole national park thing going on, man. And it was really, really, really negative the campaign, we felt. It was no to it, and it was heavily funded, heavily funded underground by Alister Jack and his billionaire friends. Do you know what I mean? And I can see like, yes, it's like that guy's politics, but it was so undemocratic. And there was just not really a voice about that. The media let us down again, etc, that as well. But yes, just that, that wee angle where, because I know it's going to come up, what can we leave for the younger generations and all that, and it's just really to have more democracy, but it's the way that we do it, you

know, without me negating and saying, oh the egos and stuff like that. But we can get people really engaged and young people at a young age, do you know what I mean, to feel empowered, to feel like- for me definitely it's like if you live in a densely populated part of Glasgow, you've got the opportunity just to feel a connection to the Earth, to the planet, to nature, because that connects with your health and your future wellbeing. I hope that I didn't go off-

[00:30:04]

Oli Mould: *No, it's good. I was about to say, spoken like a true geographer-*

Danny Alderslowe: What, a geographer?

Oli Mould: *A geographer, it's in the geography department. Anyone else want to- Yes please. Stuart.*

Stuart Housden: I'll just pick up on something that Jess said that made me think, and Lloyd too, about what's going to happen after the next election. I sort of rather think, as I sort of sit out of some of the day to day stuff a bit more, though I Chair a charity and do various other things, but we are being overwhelmed by the civil service by consultation. They put out papers, engage tons of staff effort in the NGO movement in responding to papers. And I think that's sort of taken over a little bit from that exciting real face to face engagement that happened in the early days two or three years after the devolution and the establishment of the Parliament. And I don't think what we get now is very meaningful, because it allows a control, it takes up tons of effort, brigades you into this sort of syphon of responding to stuff. And all the radical ideas get beaten out because the way the consultation starts, the questions you are allowed to answer aren't the ones you want to put forward. So I think that's a challenge for us, we've got to sort of step back and try and capture that. And the other thing is that we talked as if the NGO movement and the environmental movement's desires are always absolutely aligned and coincided. But sometimes they're not, you know. For example, at the moment there's a huge proposal for offshore wind at Berwick Bank. And I Chair the Scottish Seabird Centre and we are opposed to it because it's going to kill thousands of puffins and other seabirds, which are already under pressure. And part of the reason it's under pressure is that there's already a huge amount of offshore wind consented in the Firth of Forth. So the sort of capacity of the populations to withstand that additional

mortality has largely been taken. And it wasn't taken strategically so we've got schemes that kill lots of birds but don't do a lot of power, and so on and so forth. But, you know, there are other NGOs who would absolutely want that at any cost, you know. As one person said to me, 'It's only a few hundred puffins, why are you making a fuss?' So some of these are difficult, but the fact that we do know each other actually does help you be able to talk it through and sort of keep-, you know, it isn't what you've described about 'I don't know who these people are, doesn't really matter, I'm only interested in this or that.' So we do have that camaraderie and sort of spirit of trying not to fall out in public, which I think is a good thing.

[00:33:06]

Oli Mould: John.

John Simpson: Well all I'd like to mention really from my perspective as a police officer at the time was positivity. That was what really came out of devolution. And they were- the Minister used to have a monthly meeting with this collective of police wildlife crime officers, which was difficult to get a meeting at all, let alone once a month. They'd either come to the college or we would go to them. And the bottom line, well I've got a few things noted here: it was utterly competitive, that's how it came across to us, between, you're quite right to mention, the Scottish Government and the UK Government, the bottom line is, 'Anything you can do we can do better.' Come up with the creativity, what could this legislation that we're going to put to you, you're going to be the practitioners of this, will this work or won't it work? So this, sort of, developing a collaboration of legislation. But the biggest thing for us was once that legislation's in, how are we going to promote that to the public? And we developed a strategy where the people when unhappy with an element of an environment, they would report it to the police, the police would then take it to the Procurator Fiscal to say that this legislation is not fit for purpose. So they would say, 'Well that's nothing to do with us. That's to do with the politicians.' And we would go back to the politicians. And the last piece was the press because the politicians were really looking for that, the opportunity for their five minutes of fame on camera. So linking all of these people together was a huge thing at devolution for us. And so much so that the Scottish Parliament paid for this committee to come up with at least once a week a good environmental story to promote to the public. And that,

I have to say, that was my abiding memory of devolution was that level of positivity. Is it there now?

Multiple voices: No.

John Simpson: No. It's died. And we've been dealing with the BBC, Landward and Out of Doors, over the last couple of weeks. And they are saying they're just not getting the same stream of stories that they used to get. I mean I don't know if that's the case but certainly back in those days we had a calendar of events and all the journalists could come along to that to promote those stories and keep that energy going. And we seem to have lost that impetus. That's on them, but also I would suggest it's perhaps on us too that we need to get that movement back and motoring.

Oli Mould: Did you want to say?

Zarina Ahmad: Yes I wanted to go back to the question that you asked about the disconnect or the connect between like NGOs and activism, right. And I'm going to be negative here, right. So I'm not going to be so positive. But I do think that a lot of it is about positionality and who gets paid and who gets resourced. So the big NGOs are well resourced and get paid. And they end up being- Because a lot of their funding comes from Scottish Government. So they end up being like puppets for Scottish Government. Whereas activists, small community grassroots activists do not get funding. It's really difficult.

Danny Alderslowe: And we have to fight hard for it.

Zarina Ahmad: And they've got to fight hard for it. And then you've got to pitch-

Danny Alderslowe: Compete with each other.

Zarina Ahmad: That's what I was just about to say, then you've got to pitch yourself against each other. So you know this like divide and rule thing, it really does happen. So when we talk about collaboration, collaboration can happen at a certain level but at a different level there's a lot of divide, and it's much harder for grassroots communities to come together. And I think there's still a lot of work there. And what happens, the way

that we can bridge it is like people like myself and Danny and Ric that maybe hold multiple hats and we kind of bridge the two. But then it becomes difficult, you know. We get burnout, we get, we move on or, you know, things happen.

Danny Alderslowe: Yes, there's far too many projects that don't exist anymore that were really good. In this city alone that I know of, but I know some in Edinburgh as well. But just that, that pressure, now like there is cutbacks. You know something that's happening just now, that people are not aware of, because I started this project ten years ago and it was all about cycling's just too expensive for a lot of the people I know in Scotland, and it's too expensive for the repairs etc. It's a wealthy industry cycling. But the Scottish Government just changed the regulation and the funds where it's-, they stopped giving the money to like- Your big project was Paths For All, and they did all the active travel and it was great, I thought, it was very, not the best designed application form right, very repetitive and all that, but it started up a really great network of lots of things to happen etc. Now it's just been changed and that money has now gone to Transport Scotland. And Transport Scotland are now five months late in giving that money out. My job has not been replaced yet because they don't have the money yet. And they've cut down a really successful project that's serving the whole region, not just our wee town, but a whole region, that's given bikes to food banks, to refugees, etc, now it's only operating two days a week. And now I have heard of three other projects around Scotland closing down because the staff are not getting their wages. So there is a fear, I think, of us on the ground that we are facing cutbacks, and it's a reverse of when devolution happened and there was suddenly a lot of money available. That's a biggie.

Oli Mould: Jo.

Jo Pike: I think some really important points are being made about how across the movement we are and are not joined up. And I relate to the comment about the idea that we kind of all know each other, but I'm not sure how true that really is. I think we're very privileged to have access to decision makers in the system and the set up that we work in. But one of the things that I also feel privileged to do in my job is I'm constantly meeting new people. And a lot of the times that I'm meeting people I think, you know, how on earth did I never know about the amazing that you're doing before? I think it's really important that we try to counter this idea that the environment sector is a club that some

people are part of and everybody else isn't. Maybe I say that because I know what it felt like coming into the environment sector, and that was actually a very positive experience but I definitely did not feel part of that club. So despite the fact it was positive, I didn't feel when I first came into the sector that I belonged in the same way as the people with the ecological background and expertise, and so on and so forth. And over time I came to realise how important it is that everybody plays a part in working towards the solutions that we all need, and we all need to be part of that solution in different ways, and people need to be able to do that on their own terms. And just a bit about funding. I think it's really interesting, I mean Scottish Wildlife Trust is a membership charity, we don't get any direct funding from the Scottish Government. And in terms of public funding we don't get any direct grants from public funding. And that used to be different actually. That is a change. We used to get what we called a framework grant from Scottish Natural Heritage, as it was then. So that's now Nature Scot. That was when I first joined in 2010. And that's all gone. So that's been replaced by things that we can all apply to in the same way as we can apply for Lottery funding and so on and the Nature Restoration Fund that exists, and is important but by no means supports a large amount of what we do. I think there is one thing that has definitely changed in the last few years, and it's the recognition among charities like Scottish Wildlife Trust, RSPB and others of the importance of community-led conservation, community-led action. And the fact that, you know, we can't do it unless communities are driving change in places that they are more connected to than anybody working at a distance.

[00:41:28]

Oli Mould: *We're running out now a little bit but I just want to come back to our initial speakers just to sort of bounce off some of the things you've heard, sort of give some thoughts how people have responded to you. So Jess do you want to-*

Jess Pepper: Yes, I mentioned about the culture of the civil service. And I think it kind of connects with quite a few of these points. I remember days of, you know, often a conversation coming up about the insider/outsider role of different organisations within collectives, whether it was Scottish Environment Link or Stop Climate Chaos coalition, which are the two I was most familiar with. And there was something about the dynamic of different folk within these collectives having different roles. And, for example as

Stuart mentioned on energy, having different opinions and these being live discussions and debates all the time. And not sort of being a dull voice because it's had to be collective but actually being something which was animated. And also that, you know, there could be the danger of group think. And I think probably twenty whatever, twenty-five years on from devolution, that possibly I think there's something about the geography of where the Parliament sits and how it's informed that folk might see that that's better informed by some parts of the country probably, and people in the country, than others. And that brings us to this important point about community. I think that's where, despite the challenges of the funding, a large chunk of which is managed by Scottish Government, that's where the bold, the creative, the innovative, the solutions, the collaborative ideas are coming up. But it is in extremely difficult- It's often unseen, unresourced, unsupported, and something like the, the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places programme from Paths For All, and that's pulled, and that now goes through much more bureaucratic filters which aren't connected with communities as well. But this is across the board. That's one-, in active and sustainable transport, that's one bit that's been pulled. And actually there's something cynical about the management of that voice, and how if you go- so I happened to be across Scotland towards the end of the financial year last year, and across communities women, largely, younger people, our elders and others, but those with the least resource were just trying to do everything that they could in their own communities, not knowing if they'd have a job or if their funding would continue in two weeks' time. And so that's where the energy is. The initiative I'm involved in, Climate Café, is about creating a space for folk to get together in their own communities and talk and act together. A lot here across the country are now connecting up more widely around the world is just remarkable in terms of what people are doing despite the lack of support and resource and even acknowledgement and value. So I think, you know, that's something about where we're at now. These connections could be strengthened even further across where folk are working, and there's different discussions underway to do that. But yes, that's a worry that they can undermine that movement. Yes.

[00:45:08]

Oli Mould: *Yes totally. Ric, do you want to-*

Ric Lander: Yes. I just wrote down a couple of quotes of things that Stuart said, 'overwhelmed by consultation,' extremely familiar. I mean, 100 percent agree. And John you know you talked about the positive early optimism. Is it still there? No. That is a clear pattern, I would certainly endorse that. I think, you know, this is a history seminar, right, we're talking about going back in time. And it's interesting, I think, one thing we haven't talked about in this section on devolution is the SNP and the important role that they have had in enabling some of this, 'It's got to be a bit better than Westminster' vibe, which I don't think you could have that if it wasn't for the SNP being there. And from us as a-, speaking as an activist in my part time but also coming from a kind of activist organisation, it's always been refreshing when the SNP have spoken in the terms of their kind of activist roots, you know, like going back to the seventies and eighties when they were in politics to be pissed off and it was all kind of about making a fuss. Friends of the Earth Scotland was founded in 1978 because the paperwork was filled in presuming that a Scottish Assembly was going to be formed, and then it didn't meet the threshold, so we sort of weren't supposed to exist, it was kind of a mistake. But so, you have that kind of activist, kind of anti-Westminster vibe was something that was possible to appeal to when you were trying to campaign. And that was there through Salmond, seems hard to believe that now with his politics in later years, but it was certainly there when he was First Minister. It was really clear with Nicola Sturgeon. And more recently, I was just watching the news a couple of days ago about the by-election that's taking place today, and John Swinney was on the news and he was talking really clearly about a pro-kind of migrant solidarity approach that the SNP wanted to centre, to counter the poison that was coming in from Reform in this by-election. And the way in which Swinney is so just comfortable with speaking in that manner, in a way which is clearly against the policies coming out of Labour in London, if you come from a kind of an activist organisation, whether you're campaigning on climate or anything else, it just feels good, right, when you're seeing someone who is willing to just call bullshit on something, excuse my swearing. And often SNP First Ministers and others, I mean you think of people like Mhairi Black for example, the fact that the SNP had real proper activists who were like outspoken and stuff, and that made you feel like maybe, maybe this country was a place where actually justice could be foregrounded and you can make progress. And we saw that when had wins on fracking because they understood why people were kind of pissed off and they were willing to kind of sound pissed off themselves. They didn't feel the need to sound very civil servicey all the time. And that often felt really important when

you were trying to foreground these campaigns. And certainly Nicola Sturgeon's willingness to kind of speak in that sort of language as well. But the SNP's role has certainly not always been positive. And Friends of the Earth Scotland has been one of the key organisations campaigning on oil and gas and transition from oil and gas. And I had several meetings with civil servants and SNP staffers in the 2010s, where as soon as you mentioned oil the conversation just died. Like the oxygen just left the room. We are just not talking about this. And that changed when we had the youth strikes and Extinction Rebellion in 2019. It suddenly became something that it was possible to raise. But before that time it was not something the SNP, and it was always blanket, was willing to talk about. And of course the history is important with that. But there's just one last thing I wanted to mention, which has not come up, which is another thing which the SNP administration have really foregrounded, which is centralisation. So local authorities in this country have lost power and money progressively over the last fifteen years because the SNP main administration has seen to centralise services, taxation and so on in Edinburgh. And that has had a really important effect on the way that we campaign as well. Because it's increasingly hard to talk to City Hall in Glasgow or Edinburgh or Dundee or whatever to solve problems, because their hands are tied so much by really, really tight funding constraints. And that is something that I am willing to blame on the SNP. I feel that is something that they have been responsible for. Could speak for another three hours on that one.

Oli Mould: *Thank you very much. And I think being pissed off with politicians is a good place to leave. So thank you very much. There'll be more cake and tea now and we'll reconvene in, what, ten minutes?*

[Audio ends: 00:50:41]

3) Session C: Are there lessons from the experience of Scotland that future generations can learn from?

Saskia Papadakis:. *Hi, I'm Saskia. I'm one of the researchers on the OHEM project. And I am delighted to be Chairing the final session today on, 'Are there lessons from the experience of Scotland that future generations can learn from?' So I think your programme is slightly different but we're going to hear from Danny, Lloyd and Zarina first and then we'll open out the discussion to the rest of the panel. And then the last part of the session we will open it out to have a group discussion with the audience. So you'll get to contribute as well. And yes so I guess Zarina maybe I'll start with you and your reflections on any lessons that future generations can learn from Scotland's experience.*

Zarina Ahmad: Yes, so I can start off with like, I think there's three key ones for me. So one is grassroots activism. And there's been some really key points where policy has changed because of grassroots activism. So for instance thinking about like period poverty and the movement that came from grassroots community organisations to make sure that we got free period products in Scotland. And that happened here first before the UK. So that example. Then there's the tenants' rights that happened during the pandemic. Again, getting Scottish Government, from workers' rights and people that were working with migrant communities as well, migrant justice communities, and trying to get the eviction ban, the temporary eviction ban put in. And also a freeze on rent during the pandemic. So that was again a key point where grassroots movements really had that power and push for policy change and intervention. And then even at a smaller level, like so when I used to work at CEMVO Scotland with Ethnic Minority Environmental Network, there were some key things that we were able to implement with Scottish Government. So for instance we were working with Local Energy Scotland and one of the funding criteria, it excluded a lot of people from faith communities. So again pushing for that policy change where faith could be included into getting some funding. Because a lot of funders don't like you to promote faith, and again, so we worked with Scottish Government to say well, actually by having that in you're actually excluding a lot of people from putting in energy efficiency measures. So there is that space that can be really powerful. However, I'm always going to say 'and however', right, grassroots activism can be really sometimes, and I find that in Scotland compared to down in London where I do some work as well, that in Scotland it can still feel very weak and not as strong just because of, something that I think Ric was saying earlier on as well,

it's the numbers, it becomes like a numbers game. And one of the things that up in Scotland then, because we have smaller numbers, is that we do then push to collaborate. And it is much more important for us to collaborate and become collective and have a collective voice. So I think that's something that we can learn from, is like well where does this collaboration come from? And why is it important? Because I think we've heard a lot about collaboration and I think in Scotland we are very good at collaborating, right. Then the other thing is, I think Scottish Government can do national programmes, they can roll out national programmes, they can roll out national policies, a lot quicker than UK Government. And we can see that around things like the Climate Challenge Fund for instance. That was a national programme and only now UK Government are starting to think about, 'Oh we can fund community to do climate change work'. And even now it's about local authorities leading that bit of work rather than it being a national programme. So again- and there was a lot of learning from the Climate Challenge Fund that Scottish Government rolled out because it was about community activism, community taking the lead on that, but also it was how were the people connecting to other environmental issues? And that actually came as a byproduct of the Climate Challenge Fund. So again, so just thinking about the role that Scottish Government can take in being brave enough to roll out national programmes. And again I want to say there is a caveat with that, there is danger of national programmes being very top down. So I think there have been like some failures, where Scottish Government just come in and bulldoze in without thinking things through, just because they want to be the leaders and want to be seen as being better than the UK Government. So there are dangers on that as well. So if they don't do something properly it can be a bit disastrous. And then the next thing is accessibility to policy makers and we all spoke a lot about that as well earlier on. So it is much easier for civil society to engage with your MSPs and your councillors than it is when you're down south in the UK. They are on your doorstep. But it's not just about them being accessible in terms of like locality but it's actually the language that we use, right. And somebody said earlier on that it doesn't sound like civil servanty language that is used by MSPs here. And when you are down in the UK and you are speaking to anybody who is an MP there, they tend to then, I don't know, their stance changes and you can't just talk to them in a normal way. You can't just have a conversation with them. You've got to put in so much fillers of this like jargon on whatever it is that you want to talk to them, so much fluff goes into it, that it just becomes ridiculous. Whereas here you can just sit

there and just say, 'Look I've got this issue and I'm really concerned about it and blah blah blah' and that's it, right. And they get it. And that's good. So for me I think it's also like the language that we're able to use. And people- And this is where I feel as if things are changing slightly in Scottish Government or in Scottish Parliament, that the MSPs are starting to play a UK Government kind of game, right. Whereas before they really did represent the people and they were very much representative of your average person. They were from the communities that they represent. Now it really feels, and I'm worried about what Lloyd was saying, with having a new intake is, are people just going in this because this is a good career for them to be and they are getting seen, rather than just being there because they are actually passionate about making change? Whereas devolution, at the beginning of devolution it was about 'we have the power to make change and let's use that'. Whereas now it becomes much more, 'this is a career path for us to have some power'. And I think that's where the danger lies. But saying that, policy makers are accessible for us. And we are a smaller population which does help for both in terms of a national programme and for being able to be connected. So I'll leave it at that and let somebody else add more to that.

[00:07:54]

Saskia Papadakis: *Danny, do you want to come in?*

Danny Alderslowe: Just what Zarina said, thanks very much.

Zarina Ahmad: You can't do that Danny.

Danny Alderslowe: I can't? It's not one of those game shows? Right, I'm not going to leave today without saying, please watch, it's on YouTube, *Birdman of Pollok*. Because it's sort of-, so it's what I've came out with today is like activism of the nineties into pro-activism. We're always going to need activism, but even that can change where we want to help more people, inclusive, but to me there was issues with, like Extinction Rebellion and their relationship with asking people to do certain things etc. and all that. And I know that from personal experience with friends down in London etc. and that. But I just- it's called *Birdman of Pollok*, and it's the story of Free State and how it evolves into the GalGael, and just like, you know, where you've still got a voice but it widens to hearing more and it's more about collaboration and all that which I found- It's the world

that's getting really promoted and amongst other, the horrible, horrible stuff. And so in this summarisation, because I've just learned that I was going to be talking today and I've just learned that about this subject. So I find like collaboration, I'm just giving a lot as examples. So for me Govanhill Baths, like Calder Street, was the longest occupation we've had in the UK. And I was part of that. And that was a coming together, it wasn't just the coming together of minorities/nationalities. It was the coming together of class, is what I observed, which I thought was fantastic, where a lot of people that came from my background, it was very pointy finger, 'Oh they rich folk, they middle class folk' and all that. Whereas people were learning who they were sharing this amazing building with for years, Turkish baths, the different swimming pools, the saunas and lots of stuff, you know what I mean, they all had this shared thing. And I think the bigger picture is we always share love in everything that we save, and we all shared this beautiful building. It was really, you know, it was built like in 1917 by a French- And architects come over from Europe to see it because these rare- So collaboration can happen and it's finding that bond. And I find, you know, I've really enjoyed this today just listening to a lot of yous talking today about, you know, like I think part of culture, just say like the cancel culture and all that, it's like people just, 'I'm only going to like you if you totally agree with everything that I like and you like', do you know what I mean? It's like there's toleration of just simple things that people just seem to cancel others out with, you know. So I think that's a big lesson from the experience of Scotland where, you know, we saw a big split with the socialist movement, you know, etc. and all that. But really I saw a lot of good people not having a voice anymore and it was down to just personal dynamics and egos, you know, and I think like it's a really big, big, big thing. So my summary is, I'm just going to mention, because I was in the Permaculture Scotland world for a long time, helped organise an annual gatherings and it was people from all over Scotland, from all backgrounds and from all classes bringing their skills, and you were learning what they do, you know it was very hands on. And you know a big subject for me is housebuilding and the design of a community, so we're meeting people from that background, it was from your composting to how you coordinated your meetings in your communities etc. and all that. So the three ethics is people care, and to me yes definitely, why not. That's everything. That's like, you know, one world etc. all humankind etc. together. But just being aware of other people, like you're not being a male with a really loud voice in people's faces. Just little micro things that when you're designing your local community meetings, your Climate Cafés etc. and all that, you know, it's designed in a way that

everybody can be heard and they get shared and people get, etc. etc. etc. So FareShare; FareShare can go to the big picture where we're seeing, we can openly say this, where extreme wealth is getting more like that and poverty is going like that, you know. So I don't want to see food banks but we need them, and now one of my jobs is the People's Pantry which is in Govanhill, there's like 400 members and we've got a waiting list of 500. And that's where you get discounted, good quality food by the way, but it's just crazy that we're in this situation, you know. But that's FareShare. And from that, because the Baths Trust were really good at having this healthy ethos, because it's going to be not a swimming pool when we open it again in 2027, it's going to be a healthy living centre. So all our feedback, and it's great, I'm working with a bigger team now and people are collating all this admin, where something like ninety-two percent of people are saying, 'I'm eating more fruit since I joined the People's Pantry'. Because we're giving out menus and recipes and the benefits etc. And I'm the community gardener, so I have forty raised beds and I'm getting lots of volunteers and working with people. So that's the fair share of it. And that can- like the people care etc. etc. And then basically the earth care. And to me, you know, I think I got brought in the time where I go back to, I got brought up in East Kilbride, like a new town, I lived in the old part and I loved it, but I go back, when I used to go back, 'Oh here's Danny the hippy', do you know what I mean? But this is a masculine thing, especially if you're a male, if you like, I don't over use the word but I'm not afraid to say to friends, 'I love you.' I say it to my dad, 'I love you dad', do you know what I mean? It's just overcoming that, where we should be proud, man, of loving nature because it helps you sustain and it makes you healthy and it makes you be there for people and support people. And one of the points I made was-, at this meeting the other day we nearly- we lost a lovely girl in Govan, and she'd just had enough, you know, and she's got a kid, and do you know what she wanted, and she's come through the GalGael, massive addiction, why you can tell her story, and she turned out to be an amazing woodcarver, one of my loveliest carvings is she did this carving of this druid thing, beautiful face on a bit of wood, but her request is, she doesn't have anywhere to go and sit in nature locally, you know a healing space. And it's like we were talking there Ric where, you know, sadly politicians seem at a distance, sorry Zarina and I'm talking about politicians here, they're despondent of people, 'Oh people in this area, they're not interested in trees or having a nice space or hearing birdsong', do you know what I mean? And that's why they'll build in places like in Aberdeen etc. as well. So the earth care is just like, we've got to like be really brave and say, 'I'm really proud of loving

nature, because it gives it so much,' and be able to say, you know, like we did with the young folk and got to see like, you know, the puffins, or the golden eagles etc. and all that, do you know what I mean? We've got to be braver, and I think that's a good lesson. Especially for us men. Is that all right?

Saskia Papadakis: *Thank you. Thank you Danny.*

Danny Alderslowe: Watch the *Birdman of Pollok* because it is, it's uplifting. And sorry I'm going to take from this design that I'm going to, with all our communities, see how we can get a representative, because we don't have time to attend Link etc. and all that. Do you know what I mean? Because I really want to take-.

Saskia Papadakis: *That's a lovely way in which you can take things forward. Thanks Danny.*

Danny Alderslowe: Yes. I'm really grateful for this, man.

[00:15:36]

Saskia Papadakis: *Lloyd, do you want to come in?*

Lloyd Austin: I don't know how I can follow that. I like the earth care bit and I think that was really nice. But I've got three headings for lessons for the future. And they're quite generic headings, so I think they could apply to the sort of activist community level as well as the national NGO level. And I think they can be applicable to both although my examples are going to be from the latter because that's what I know and that's my history. So the first thing is never stop, don't give up because every, any sort of hiccough or failure in the short term is a lesson for a victory in the long term, if you see what I mean. And I'm going to use one example that I was involved in over a twenty year plus period and that is on marine conservation. One of the first things I did when I started at RSPB in the early nineties was involved in launching a campaign for marine planning. And I was only a small part of it in Scotland, and the actual campaign was across the whole of the UK. And of course nothing happened in the nineties. Then later on I think late nineties or early 2000s, they launched another one for the same thing, nothing happened. And then later on the 2000s they launched another campaign and in the end we got the 2009 UK Marine Act and the 2010 Scottish Marine Act, which introduced

marine protected areas and marine planning. And they're being implemented now, perhaps half-heartedly but they do it, and they can certainly do them better. But one thing that happened was in all those campaigns the Government and particularly the civil servants of the time were saying, 'Oh we don't need these things, we don't need this because existing measure are perfectly good, blah blah blah blah.' All the usual arguments against any innovation. And then one of the things that Stuart mentioned earlier came along, which was windfarms in the Firth of Forth, which were very controversial at the time, and one of the senior civil servants, I'm not going to say who it is, but one of them said to me, 'I just wish we had had that Marine Act earlier because we'd have a marine plan in place and we'd be able to have a system to decide where these things should go.' And I said, 'Well, yes, told you so.' And you know, I mean it was obviously his predecessors that had rejected the idea earlier on. But what I'm saying is that, you know, from the environmentalist point of view, we know we're right. But eventually the opponents will tell you you were right as well, but they will claim it as their own idea. And that is one of the classic examples of what is a good piece of advocacy, whether it's local or national, and that is to persuade someone important that your idea is actually their idea. And then once they've got it as their idea, it will happen. So that's my first one. My second one is building on the theme of collaboration. And I think all of the sort of collaboration between allies is very good. And we should carry on doing it and doing it more of it of course. But one of the things that works remarkably well is what you might call unexpected collaboration. Collaboration between partners who those that are resisting your idea might find difficult to object to. So a couple of examples. One example again from my RSPB days, we did some joint working with the Scottish Crofters Union. And that was very successful because the then Scottish Office, Scottish Executive, Scottish Government over the years, they put the Crofters Union and the RSPB in two opposite camps. So they expected the two organisations to want two different things in opposite directions. And to argue with both of us that doing nothing and staying where they were in the middle was upsetting us both equally and not giving in to the other side, if you see what I mean. But when we came along together and wanted the same change they didn't quite know how to react. And that discombobulated them, which was very good. So I do think the amplifying the voices of what you might call the environmentally friendly parts of a traditional industry, whether it be farmers, foresters, fishermen and so forth, it is a potential extra form of collaboration. An unexpected form of collaboration that can win benefits for both parties, even if what you

might call the old school elements of those industries are still arguing for the status quo. And my third thing, which is a similar theme in a way, and that is to try new things without throwing out the tried and tested. So I think the tried and tested things is, you know, things like protecting species and protecting important sites are tried and tested, we know they work if they're implemented properly and we shouldn't stop doing them and we've got to carry on campaigning to do them better. But that doesn't mean you can't at the same time start doing new things, new types of campaigning, working with new partners, working with community activists and so on. And the things that's inspired me in the last few years is what I mentioned in one of the other sessions, which is that the human rights perspective and linking human right to a healthy environment and clean air, clean water, access to green spaces including biodiversity, climate justice and all of those human, environmental rights, alongside rights for disadvantaged groups whether they be refugees or feminist arguments, etc. etc. Those all, combining those mean that you can get similar sort of new partnerships developing. And one of the things that we've done with the ERCS is work with the other human rights organisations on the proposed Scottish Human Rights Bill. And the environmental element within that, that the Scottish Government are struggling to turn it down when they are faced with an alliance of environmentalists and human rights, other human rights organisations that they don't want to be seen to be antagonistic to. So yes those are my three things: never stop; collaborate, especially with new and unexpected partners; and the benefits of new things and new ideas without throwing out the tried and tested.

[00:24:03]

Danny Alderslowe: Nice.

Saskia Papadakis: *Brilliant. Thank you. Thank you for all those really interesting interventions. That was really great to hear all the different, not to get too geography, but all the different scales we're talking about, from the kind of national policy and the kind of global solidarity and also thinking about how things work specifically in Scotland, at activists and grassroots level and, yes, the national policy level. So yes I want to invite our other panellists to come in now if they have any thoughts or reflections that they want to contribute. Yes Stuart go for it.*

Stuart Housden: I'm sort of, I mean I pick up on Lloyd's 'never give up' point because I think that is absolutely core, that if you do give up you've lost the momentum and you

mustn't give up. I have sort of been asking myself, what are the big challenges, you know, where are we in, you know, from when we collectively all started pre-devolution, through devolution. You know are we in better shape? And in many, many ways we are, you know, the access, the hopefully the understanding, the greater community depth and breadth of people concerned about all of the issues that we've been talking about. All of that is far better. And the connectivity between us and with our elected representatives. That's undoubtedly moved. In other terms, you know, we are making progress on climate but not fast enough. I'm sure we could pick all sorts of different sectors. We are still going backwards on nature and biodiversity, quite strongly in some cases. We know how to stop things disappearing totally when they become very rare and scarce but we can't stop the slide down. So we are in one of the most nature depleted parts of the world, and that is taking something from our children, you know. I mean I'm a grandfather. When I was growing up I had three times the greater chance to hear a skylark singing than my grandchildren do now. And that's just one thing, you know. You can- dozens and dozens of things. And at the moment climate is a bit of an issue for nature. But it's accelerating because of what we've done to the landscape. We've fragmented it, we've made farmland so much more inhospitable to nature, the uplands we're doing things to that make it more difficult. And we're not putting nature first enough in our decision making and our planning and our strategic thinking. And I do agree with what all been said, that it's connecting that knowledge, because you have a sort of intergenerational, you know, what I grew up with remembering, very few people now have that knowledge or experience, and people growing up now it's a sort of shrinking baseline. And I do really, really worry about that. You've got to be optimistic. You've got to have hope, because you can despair about some of this if you are not careful. And the hope is that when we do get it right we can actually make some fantastic things happen. And somehow we've got to find a way of magicking more of that together to get the future in a brighter place. And to me that is the huge challenge, you know, what is all this for if we can't actually halt the steady decline of the environmental quality and the sheer opportunities that people might have in the future. We are the generation in the next few years that have got to try and find a way of bottoming it out and getting it better.

[00:28:11]

Saskia Papadakis: *Yes, does anyone else want to come in? Jess, yes.*

Jess Pepper: Yes, I mean, so much that, yes, agree with. Interesting, I think, it came up earlier as well that sometimes – and I think Ric mentioned about after the Climate Act – things can quieten down a bit. And there's that, when people get exhausted by the effort or the lack of hope and optimism, that can take a dip. But the thing which can help to build momentum and to motivate is these connections and these collaborations, and acknowledging what can be done when we work, we come together. I think, you know, connecting the emergencies and what Lloyd is talking about in terms of rights and tackling inequalities and poverty and injustice and all of these things are connected. When folk get together and connect and can move like that, I suppose one thing I would maybe add to that is creating the space to do that. And we are hearing that there seems to be more voices being heard in that space, but actually amplifying the voices that are heard least and the diversity of that conversation motivates, informs, inspires, you know, and gets everybody involved. And that can create a sort of momentum and a hope that I think, you know, what choice do we have? We can sit in despair or we can crack on here and not give up. And actually creating that space for the youngest, and for me the youngest, and that is certainly the case in the Climate Café movement, it's the children and the youngest folk who are leading.

Saskia Papadakis: *Can you just explain what the Climate Café is?*

Jess Pepper: So Climate Café is just really a pop-up space within a community to bring folk together to chat and act on climate. And what's fascinating is-, so that's a decade these spaces have been popping up in communities, and it's been completely organic, from rural Scotland to now a global network of folk getting together in their own communities and chatting. And that might be a community of place or a community of interest. But it is community led, so there's no direction or agenda, it's just a space. You might have a cup of tea or you might biscuits, cake if you're lucky. But they're all unique because they're led by the folk who are of that place or of that work place or school or community. And when folk connect in that way, you know, remarkable action can come out of that because it's the priorities of the folk who are together in that place. And the conversation kind of filters out. So what you see is folk getting more involved in the chat whether they come along to that space or not within a community. And then folk coming

up with ideas and solutions and just all finding their own niche in that and it becomes a sort of collective effort. So as well as building connection and kind of hope and support, it's also building community resilience as well. And as folk connect up across regions and then nations and now globally, you know, it's not very resource intense but it's a way of folk coming together and kind of engendering that sense of community. But what you hear are folk say they're inspired actually which is interesting. And that they feel a sense of agency and that you see that momentum kind of taking over, folk achieving things and then that adds to more and more and growing projects. All sorts of different things come out of that. But what that's taught me through the experience, whether in Link or the coalition or listening today seeing what's happened to other campaigns, is that, if there's a sense of space for folk to come together and it's inclusive of everybody, then that can maybe help us, you know. It seems meek and mild to get together for a blether or a chat in the face of these emergencies but actually it's that ownership from our own experience and place. It's that people and nature thing we're maybe coming back to as well, yes, it informs that.

[00:32:19]

Zarina Ahmad: Yes and it's interesting, Jess, that you are saying that because a lot of my work has been in that space where you create new spaces for people that would not normally have any agency over any climate policies or decision making or even having a conversation. And when you do, it's like they're really interested. But it goes to a certain level and then it gets stuck, right. And that's where I find the frustration lies because, yes there might be like a need, a want, a desire, a will, all of these things might be there but then if the infrastructure and the systemic changes aren't there for them to feed into, it causes like a backlash sometimes. And I just think, and this is where I think like that collaboration is really important, especially with the bigger NGOs that might have that power to have the ear of policy makers, but it's really about systemic changes that we need. And yes, and I agree and it's just like how do we stop breaking that?

Jess Pepper: Can I pick up on that?

Zarina Ahmad: Yes.

Saskia Papadakis: *Yes, sorry and then Jo.*

Jess Pepper: Yes, yes and then move on. Interesting, really interesting because this is obviously is an experience that so many of us have had and see. What's interesting, I think, which we're observing and, you know, this will happen across other movements as well, some of which you've mentioned earlier, is that actually when these things connect it creates a political space. And when you start to create the political space, like Climate Strike did, you allow the political leaders and, you know, it can be businesses as well to move into that space. Obviously if it's a couple of voices that they hear or they think they hear and not the murmuring of hundreds, thousands and more, then they're not confident that there's a political space. And of course our elected leaders can't go beyond what they think that political space is because they risk not being elected again. So that if they know that that space is there by connecting these things up, hopefully that- And we're seeing some of that come to informing systemic change.

[00:34:24]

Zarina Ahmad: And then could I just bounce back. Sorry, it's just really interesting because it's like the spaces that I am in with like racialised communities, is that that space is becoming harder to step in because of laws now. Like the hostile environment laws, anti-protest laws, all of these laws, antisemitic laws. And that's making it really difficult now to like step up into that space. Whereas I would say like ten years ago it was a little bit easier. It was still difficult but it was a little bit easier. But now it just seems even harder.

[00:35:00]

Saskia Papadakis: *Jo do you want to come in there?*

Jo Pike: Yes. I really agree with so many of these fantastic comments that have been made by Zarina and Danny and Lloyd and Stuart and Jess. And I know that they say that a panel should never all agree with each other but at the risk of an outbreak of violent agreement [Laughter]

Danny Alderslowe: I disagree with that! [Laughter]

Jo Pike: The one thing that occurs to me based on what people have been saying is that, you know, the reality is that we are facing a nature crisis and a climate crisis and they're inextricably interlinked. But the vast majority of people don't get up in the morning with an intention to pollute an ecosystem or destroy a habitat or harm a species. And I think that one of the things that is as important as it has ever been is trust, and actually trusting people goes both ways and helps to build trust if you demonstrate trust in people, whether that's communities, whether it's farmers, whether it- and so on. But I think to actually turn that into action, one of the things that we really need is incentives to go with that so that, you know, we know some things have to be mandated by law, that's really important, that some things are regulated or banned. But you can't do that with everything. And equally we can't just appeal to people's better nature to solve all of our problems. So I think if we could think a little bit more about how do you trust people and then incentivise action so that you get that balance of agency, where people can make decisions about how they are going to contribute to this societal, existential problem, but can be rewarded properly for doing so, then I think that's part of what I think we need to think about.

[00:37:09]

Danny Alderslowe: Have we got time?

Saskia Papadakis: *Yes sorry, John do you want to and then Danny.*

John Simpson: Yes, just a few quick points. Lessons to take forward for future generations. What is it to be an activist? That's my big thing. So for me it's a pencil and a notebook and a wee pair of binoculars. And you can literally change quite sizeable landscapes by doing nothing more than a bit of field work. Everybody has the capability for that. And that was a cracking statement just made there about, I genuinely believe, being a bit of an optimist, there's more of us than there is of them. I think if we look back to the 1980s we would have been the lunatic fringe. We are now no longer the lunatic fringe, we are mainstream. And I do believe, as a movement, we're going places. We just need to have a bit of confidence and drive to get it there, I'll be honest. But relatively small things can change. Mentoring, Stuart mentioned quite rightly. We're getting to an age, I have benefitted from going Kelvingrove Museum and listening, in my teens, I used to get smuggled into an SOC meeting because I was too young to be there,

but I would listen to people who I thought were ancient, they were in their thirties. Don't go to the grave with what you know. So what we've established now, within Raptor work but wider ornithology, is a mentoring scheme to get them as they're coming out of university with their degrees in ecology, it may be planning, it may be all sorts of things that they're going to go into, these are the people that for the last ten to twenty years we've been locking horns with. So let's get them now. Let's get them with their academic background and get them out onto the ground to see what it is to go to an eagle's nest or a hen harrier's nest, and why are peregrine on a Scottish mountainside so important. Take those lessons and take them back into your working life. So we've got a bit of a mentoring scheme going on just now with Glasgow University, so they're all coming out of the zoology department. Let's get them trained for the challenges that we're going to meet in the future. And the last thing is, never accept what you hear. Natural environments are always changing. Things are evolving. So always be inquisitive. So if I was to say to any young person coming up through, that's going to fill our shoes, always be inquisitive and always challenge these things, because sure as fate, you will find something that will change your landscape for everybody and for the better.

[00:39:54]

Saskia Papadakis: *Thanks. I'll say Ric and then Danny do you want to come in, just to give Ric a chance to-*

Ric Lander: All right, thank you. Yes I've got my little shopping list as well, listening to what others are saying is really interesting. I mean I feel, because this is being recorded I feel like it's worth just saying for the record that it is 2025 and humanity has survived this far to some extent. The President of the United States is Donald Trump, and that is a real thing which has managed to happen, completely inconceivable ten or fifteen years ago when we were campaigning to stop his golf course trashing Aberdeenshire. And globally politics is in a really, really frightening place. You know I think a lot of us feel this if we're moving in international spaces. But even just reading the news. And, you know, ten years ago we were talking about the role of the far-right in trashing climate policy. And of course they are absolutely poised to do that. In five years' time we could very easily have far right governments in France, in The Netherlands, in Germany and potentially in the UK as well. So this is a really dangerous place. And the reason why it's

dangerous, it's not because they're against climate protection and the environment, but because they're against democracy. And we cannot win environmental campaigns and protecting nature and the environment if we don't have institutions where people can raise their voice anymore. And that's absolutely what's at stake, that, you know, the US Government at the moment is against the existence of government, you know, this is an anti-institution and anti-legal system, anti-due-process movement that's sweeping the world right now. And we need to counter that in order to survive as a movement and in order to be able to continue to, kind of, progress. I had a meeting two, three weeks ago in Glasgow with community organising groups including Living Rent and others talking about how to work at community level to depolarise and work with isolated communities to counter the organising which far-right, extreme right groups are doing in the Central Belt, feeding off histories of sectarianism and isolation, economic deprivation, in order to organise people to trash a lot of what we've been trying to do. And so we need to build, work collaboratively way bigger than the environment movement, you know. It's not just going to be enough for environmental groups to work together to counter something so existential as this. You know civil society is at risk here, full scale. And there are many reasons why that threat may come slower to Scotland but it's still certainly very present. And so that was the first thing I wanted to say. I mean the second thing I think comes from-, oh and just to say as well, it doesn't need to be about formal coalitions as well. So we have had success with formal coalitions and Link and Stop Climate Chaos have been mentioned several times. But informal coalitions, you know, groups, unusual friends like Lloyd said, just speaking with another, staying in touch and working out where are the intersections between your struggles has often been really, really fruitful in the history of this activism. I think, I can't remember, I think it was Zarina was talking about Scotland being a small place and numbers, number of people that you can get together being important. And this affects the way in which I think the structure of democracy in a country is really important. This is why devolution was on the agenda today, because devolution mattered of us being able to win campaigns. And that is a lesson that other places can take, because if you have a highly centralised government where all the decisions are made in one big city that's far away, your country is not as democratic. You are going to struggle to win those kind of campaigns. So we need institutions which are grounded in local, regional and national politics in order to be able to win campaigns. And that is something that people can struggle for and win in other places. And I would argue that we need more local and community level government in Scotland as well to

enable us to win in more places. And the last thing I wanted to say, which sort of counters the concept of this whole question, is don't copy and paste from abroad, right. Do campaigns which make sense and are rooted in place. I'm not just saying this because a geographer is Chairing. But, you know, you have to start from local communities and build a bridge to local community experience and concern. And that is things like health, transport, food, people's local experience of what they're seeing right on their doorstep and their neighbourhood, and organise people at community level. And scaling that up to a national level, that means doing campaigning which is Scottish. It's not a UK campaign that you just kind of like shoved a bit of tartan on or something. But actually, you know-

Danny Alderslowe: Shortbread.

Ric Lander: Right, and you've put a kilt on it, right. Forget that. We need to be linking with the history of struggle in this country around housing and the Red Clyde, and 'The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil', and more recent things like the fracking movement, which was a really Scottish kind of movement. And if we can-, and other countries need to do that in their own way, and I think we have been more successful when we have built from the experience of people here.

[00:45:55]

Saskia Papadakis: *Thanks Ric. And then Danny do you want to come and then I'll open up the question.*

Danny Alderslowe: What Ric said.

Saskia Papadakis: *Yes, yes.*

Danny Alderslowe: And everybody else. Yes, I think I would say my activism is definitely community, because that's the unselfish act. You know, and you as an individual, not as an ego-driven thing, but what you do has an impact on the ecosystem of this planet we're on, you know. And that's a nice thing to inherit, to feel good about yourself. You've got a part to play, because I think like the system we've got, we're told we don't have a part to play, you don't have a voice. So cynically again going back to that's why a lot of people just won't vote, you know. I remember there was a thing called

Enough, there was sort of movement about like how we can reach Net Zero etc. but on a local level. Like enough. And I quite liked that. No I did like that, it was very fair share. And I think one of the lessons is raising your head above the parapet, because I really hear what Ric's saying, you know, and I think it's getting a bit more aggressive again, you know, the climate out there, not *the* climate but the climate is as well. Good metaphor. You know just if you're raising your head above the parapet. And back in the nineties, I'd have relations, family and that, going to me, 'Oh Danny man you're just a space cadet, you want us all to live in treehouses, etc.' and all that, do you know what I mean. But basically you meet cynicism, and people from different walks of life will meet cynicism. But I get people that apologise you know, 'Sorry Danny, I'm getting in my car,' and all that. 'Don't worry about it man.' And I find it's like, the earth can take x amount of pollution. It can't take the pollution that we keep growing and growing and growing. And I think it's like getting over the message. We can still have pollution, you can your wee bit of, do you know what I mean, car journeys etc and all that, but there's *enough,* and we can share that responsibility. And if only if that was a government strategy, a European strategy, that we had this balance that it is enough, just reach that enough level, you know. So I think it's like we've all- No, the word guilty, I got brought up a Catholic right and the guilt trip and all that, but you know it's not that we're all guilty but it's unavoidable, a lot of the actions that we've got and how this has been designed by the others, you can say. And that's why I would just say, man, wherever you live, see what you've got in your local area and go and join man. Because, it's like what you were talking about, talking about up in Aberdeen etc. and the Govanhill Baths, there is just unheard people and they know so much, they know that local wildlife, you know. They know it because they see it. And there is no way they get to express that, it's just the experience they have in their daily life. But to open it up and meet, that there's somebody three doors along from you, you've got a good kinship with, or there's a great wee project that's- And just design your life that you're not burning out but you've got those hours in your time, just to do a wee bit or something, and then just, you know what I mean, let that evolve.

[00:49:01]

Saskia Papadakis: *That's a great note to end this part of the day on. Thanks Danny. And, yes-*

Multiple voices: [Overtalking]

Danny Alderslowe: Yes I knew this lot would have something else to say.

Zarina Ahmad: I'm just going to like put yours into two words, just to actually say what Danny said. It's like, it's moving the ego to the eco.

Danny Alderslowe: Yes, yes I like that.

Zarina Ahmad: That's how I see it.

Danny Alderslowe: Oh nice Zarina. Yes.

Zarina Ahmad: You said it, I just put it together.

Saskia Papadakis: *Yes, on that note does anyone in our audience have any questions for anyone on the panel, or just general questions they'd like to ask? Toby.*

Toby Butler: Right. Yes that was a really interesting point that you made about how things do sort of come from the ground and the grassroots and be local. But I'm just wondering whether, particularly some of the larger organisations here, whether there's been much communication with your colleagues in Wales and Northern Ireland that are both working through different forms of post-devolution life, I suppose. I was thinking the seminar we had in Wales was fascinating in terms of the fact that they also echoed the optimism and the access to the local decision-makers. They also echoed the disappointment with perhaps, you know, how it hasn't quite been how they expected, the lack of resources, the feeling that how much actual real power do they have. I think there was a feeling of that in the room. But also to their great credit they have the Future Generations Act, which is an incredible ideal, and almost frustration that it hadn't quite played out necessarily as they hoped at the moment. But still, I'm just wondering whether there has been much kind of toing and froing and swapping of ideas in terms of colleagues in Wales or beyond.

Saskia Papadakis: *Lloyd.*

Lloyd Austin: Well I'll say a couple of things. First of all quite a lot of the big NGOs are UK-wide and so they do have interaction between the different countries within their organisations. But within the four Links there is also interactions. So the sort of formally Environment Links of the UK network, which is the four Links joining up and being a Link for the Links, if you see what I mean. And that's provided that comparison as well. And one of the things about the early days of devolution, which we were describing earlier, was where there was kind of a race to the top, where different countries were trying to do different things in different ways and being better than one another. And the Future Generations Act was the Welsh example of them trying to be better, and Scotland had other areas where it was in advance of England/UK or Wales, etc. So, yes, there is a lot of cross-fertilisation and there is a Private Member's Bill in the Scottish Parliament for a Future Generations Commissioner, which isn't going to get anywhere because of the election timetable. But, you know, that discussion and trying to copy from Wales is happening, and we know Wales are asking us about Environmental Standards Scotland because they have a governance Bill in the Senedd at the moment. So, yes, there is that kind of cross-fertilisation. I would just say that I think one of the contributing factors to the sort of decline of that enthusiasm and ambition between the countries has been one of the fallouts from Brexit, which is the Internal Market Act, which has made all of the devolved administrations, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, reluctant to be innovative because the UK Government is both the government for England, as far as the Internal Market Act is concerned, but it's also the referee, so it's kind of, between the four administrations, if that makes sense. So the UK Government has two roles. It's the English Government and the referee. And it was that Act that effectively scuppered the Scottish deposit return scheme, which was Scotland trying to go one step ahead of the other countries of the UK. Although, and if it does materialise now, it's supposed to be materialised in 2027, it will be a less ambitious scheme but it will be across the whole of the UK. So, yes, that's my thoughts to that question.

[00:53:58]

Jo Pike: I would say within the Wildlife Trusts movement as well, of course each individual Wildlife Trust is an independent charity, but we liaise and learn from and talk to each other a lot. And that's been relevant to the nature finance agenda maybe, most recently, where I contributed to a discussion in Wales a while ago. I think one of the

things about the Future Generations Commissioner, it's the power of something simple. I think people have really got behind that. For all the weaknesses of execution and the realities of things that don't go as fast as everybody would like, there is something powerful about simple ideas. And I think that's a good one. But, yes, we do try to do as much learning as possible.

Saskia Papadakis: *Stuart, yes.*

Stuart Housden: Yes I think there's slightly a tendency, you know, if you're in Wales to look at what Scotland is doing and you see lots of good things. You know it's the grass over the fence sort of thing, you know. And we will look at Wales and think, oh you know, we'd love one of these, and so forth. What I would say over the last, I don't know, two decades is that Northern Ireland is always the last, usually, to adopt something. It sort of struggles I think with capacity to bring forward the sort of depth of policy thinking and the legislation to delivering things. But probably there are other benefits, as a relatively small country. But all of us, I think, in all four countries, we all are caught by the vagaries of, you know, public policy and the strength of some of the traditional landowning, land managing, fishing type industries, who have their own connections, you know. Numerically they are quite small but they're important in their own circumstances. So there's always struggles around some of these things. And perhaps the big gains lately haven't been made, but it's a sort of series of small steps, often as Lloyd says trying to protect what we had before. You know we're trying to protect the high water mark, which was probably the enthusiasm to reformed the Common Agricultural Policy to switch farms support to supporting public benefits, public goods. All these things, they're all in retreat, all across the four nations at the moment. So, yes, we can learn and, yes, we've got to be optimistic, and we've got to try and borrow the best as Lloyd says. But I think we are in a bit of a challenging situation at the moment. It sort of feels that holding the line of what's been achieved is actually-, you know, there's pushback and there's a race, nobody wants to be the place where you can't do business because planning laws are more rigorous here than they are likely to be in England. I mean I just remember when it was tightened up in England about open cast coal mining, really tightened up, and suddenly all across the Central Belt and the borders we had English-based companies doing open cast coaling, and they all switched across to Scotland because a) there was reserves and b) the bonds you had to put in place, the requirements to consult,

the EIAs, were all less rigorous. So they abandoned England because you had to put up tens of millions as bonds to restore places, and they all came to Scotland, then declared themselves bust and left bloody great holes in the ground, which are still costing the taxpayer. So you know that's the risk that we face.

[00:57:56]

Saskia Papadakis: *Ric do you want to come in?*

Ric Lander: I would just, on this question of working with colleagues outwith Scotland, or the UK as someone one time has described as a foreign country, like we're in Scotland. Often actually a lot of this dynamic is sometimes a little bit defensive and negative from our point of view. So you're worried about people, so Friends of the Earth Scotland, as I mentioned, we're a distinct organisation. We're a bit weird, there's not many set up in this way. Our sister organisation is Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland. There are still a decent number of staff who I think don't realise that they're not a Scottish organisation, they think they're UK wide. Don't think they'll mind me saying that because they don't know where Scotland is. So this, you have to remind people of how devolution and Scot's law and all that kind of thing, is quite a constant thing. But then you also find yourself thinking, please if you're going to do Westminster stuff, can you let us know if you're speaking to MPs or whatever, because there's this worry that they're not going to know and understand the politics of what's happening in Scotland, within the Scottish political parties, and that they might muddle things and mess things up a little bit. And often, you know, because the train has often been Scotland leading on policy and then Wales carriage comes next and maybe bits of England come after that and then Northern Ireland at the end, and that's the kind of train running along the track, you find yourself briefing English colleagues to not tell Scottish decision-makers that they're doing good, because you don't want them to realise that they are far out ahead. You know, you have your colleagues in England telling someone in the SNP, 'Oh you're doing brilliant work.' Then they're not going to listen to me when I go and tell them they're not working hard enough. So that dynamic can be often really actually quite awkward and frustrating to manage at times. And I suspect that's not been unique to Scotland's advocacy. Bloody annoying.

[01:00:16]

Saskia Papadakis: *Well actually, yes, maybe I have a question off the back of that, is that in one of the breaks we were talking about, we've mentioned London-centrism quite a lot, but we haven't really talked about the dynamics within Scotland, where obviously Parliament's based in Edinburgh. How does that affect the kind of dynamics of your work in terms of things being possible or not possible? Zarina you look like you are holding in something.*

Zarina Ahmad: I know, I'm just thinking. I mean, in terms of the work it doesn't really affect the work, but we have this saying in the sector that the Edinburgh folk won't come to Glasgow but the Glasgow folk will go to Edinburgh, right. So yes, so there is that kind of power-

Audience member: We're here today [Laughter]

Zarina Ahmad: After you're all here today, I am so happy, yes. But, yes, usually everything's held in Edinburgh. Like, you know, like the big conferences, any kind of environmental like- Because Parliament's there, you know, and you've got all the, your headquarters of like-

Danny Alderslowe: Dynamic Earth

Zarina Ahmad: Yes, and there's nobody like-, even like Scottish Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Forestry Commission, they all tend to have headquarters or offices based in Edinburgh rather than in Glasgow. They'll have other offices but, you know, it's very Edinburgh-centric. So it is Edinburgh-centric. It doesn't have an impact on the work, on my work, or doing community activism and work across that. What it does do is something that I think maybe Ric mentioned it earlier on, we were having separate conversations, is that people forget how big Scotland is. Because sometimes we think Scotland's small and Scotland gets put into like one bubble. So like, even like my work now with Women's Environmental Network, it's like you've got the North West and you've got Scotland. Like Scotland is this one place. And I'm trying to say, but if I had a staff member in Glasgow, it's very difficult for them to be working in Edinburgh as well, or go up to Aberdeen. And that's where I think the challenge lies, is like the size, when we say that it's small, but it's also-, Scotland's not one space, it's not one homogenous area. As well I think people also treat Scotland as being like Edinburgh and Glasgow has the same

culture but they don't, it's very different, even the cultures are different. You know, so it's like trying to recognise that sometimes makes it challenging.

[01:02:48]

Ric Lander: Can I speak to that really briefly?

Saskia Papadakis: *Yes, sorry Jo were you going to say something? Or I heard someone-*

Jo Pike: Yes, only very briefly. Well I think two things that I was going to add in terms of our experience in this area. So totally agree, Scotland is not homogenous. I mean it's not homogenous ecologically or demographically or even geologically. So I think that diversity is a huge strength but we don't always harness that. One of the real life examples that we've experienced over a number of years is where we've done a lot of work in the North West for example. So we've got an initiative there called the Coigach & Assynt Living Landscape, which brings together lots of neighbouring landowners and communities and so on, with a long term vision that has been developed locally. But actually tapping into funding sources for that can be difficult because big funders, so National Lottery Heritage Fund for example, which is a really important funder, they came on a journey with us and this was a very positive outcome, but they had to make quite a strong case to their colleagues south of the border for support in the North West of Scotland where the populations were so small compared to the project areas that they were funding in England with similar amounts of money. So that's a kind of practical example. But I think we do also see in the political space, when we do our policy and advocacy work, that there is this sadly growing divide between rural and urban, which I think can be weaponised by some and, you know, it's real because there's so many different issues facing rural communities and urban communities. But we obviously need to be able to try and find ways of unifying people and bringing people together rather than driving people apart and seeing that kind of polarisation. So I think we see it on that level as well.

[01:04:45]

Saskia Papadakis: *Yes thanks. Ric do you want to come in?*

Ric Lander: Yes, so I was involved in helping set up Climate Camp Scotland in 2019 and very quickly we were hit by the Covid pandemic, which just kind of ruined all of our plans. And for several years we were doing all of our organising online, entirely in Zoom calls. And one of the places that people were looking at for coming together for Climate Camp was Torry in Aberdeen because of the Saint Fitticks Park campaign which we talked about a bit in the break. But on the Zoom call we'd have people from around the country and they would talk about, you know, different places where they were from. And we did have people from quite a wide geographical range. And particularly people from Edinburgh insisted on referring to Aberdeen as being up there. This is a national-, we're all from different parts of Scotland and we're online, we're speaking online, it's not up there, it's within range, right. And 'Oh I don't know if we've got time to go up there. It's a long way for everyone to go up there.' It was really absolutely bananas. I was like, you know, it's train, it's a bus, like. But I do think it's a particular Edinburgh problem. But I feel like Glasgow people were speaking-

Danny Alderslowe: We feel like we own Aberdeen.

Ric Lander: Totally bananas. And but even on a really small scale sometimes, and I do think that often public transport is really key to this, but in 2009/10 there was an almost year-long occupation at a place called Mains Hill in Lanarkshire to stop a coal pit, an open cast coal mine being dug. And they managed to stop Scottish Coal from, slow Scottish Coal enough that a couple of years later they went bankrupt. It was a really important piece of direct action. And it was, what, an hour's drive or something from Edinburgh. But buses are rubbish. There's no other public transport. And as far as people in Edinburgh were concerned it may as well have been on the moon. You know, you're talking about a place that's like what forty miles away or something like that. And it just was like another planet, Lanarkshire, don't know where that is, you know, it's miles away. And so yes this country can feel really, really big at times actually. And I think that Edinburgh has got more to blame for that than perhaps it might do. But also, when I get in my professional role at Friend of the Earth Scotland, I find it so, so rewarding to get out of fricking Edinburgh. Because people come to stuff, you know. Like I was invited to come to some film screening evening thing in Galashiels a few years ago, and there was about forty, fifty people came. It was some YouTube video that was like five years old, people would come from all around the borders to come to this event, and they came

not just on time, they came early, they were like half an hour early because it was a chance to meet people and have a cup of tea, and it was so social and it was really, really nice. And it was an environmental campaign that happened to open that space, but it could have been anything, people just wanted a chance to come together. And in big cities people, they don't think like that. You know, I was here two minutes late, you know, that's typical Edinburgh/Glasgow behaviour. There's too many interesting things on, like there's loads of stuff to do in the cities. But campaigning out in rural areas and in small towns can be so important as a place for people to come together, and- Yes, I don't think that's really answering the question but I do think it's an interesting contribution.

[01:08:34]

Saskia Papadakis: *Lloyd and then we'll take a question from the audience if that's okay Stuart, yes.*

Lloyd Austin: Yes, I was just going to start off by commenting on something I heard before devolution but in the run up to devolution when the arguments about devolution were taking place. And quite a lot of the cases for devolution were the kind of things we talked about earlier, about being accessible and on our doorstep etc. etc. But somebody who was of a different political persuasion, from Shetland, said, 'What, is Edinburgh nearer than London?' Because actually their nearest city is Bergen. And you know they could get direct flights to London as easily as they could fly to Edinburgh, you know. So you know it all depends on your perspective of which end of the telescope you're looking down so to speak. But that was just an anecdote about it depends on where you look. And one of the things about Scotland is it incredibly diverse, you know, Shetland and the Northern Isles and the Western Isles are completely different, culturally and ecologically. And the Highlands and Islands, the Central Belt, the North East plain, the Southern Uplands and Galloway areas, and all of these, they're all so different, and to some extent the policy solutions in each area is different. So there has to- And that's one of the reasons why I'm kind of with Ric on the disappointment about the centralisation approach that the Scottish Government has taken because there is too much one-size-fits-all. Despite the fact that when we are looking for a new sort of policy or bit of legislation to come forward, one of their immediate counter arguments to any idea is, 'Oh that wouldn't work because one size doesn't fit all. We need to be flexible,' and so

forth. So, as ever, the forces of the status quo always want their cake and eat it. But that- I've forgotten what the third thing I was going to say is, so I won't.

[01:11:09]

Saskia Papadakis: *That's okay. We can always come back to it. Arthur you had a question.*

Arthur McIvor: Yes. Sorry I was trying to think of how to phrase this. I think maybe I've got two questions to pose to the panel. The first is how do you think the Witness Seminar format's worked for you in terms of interacting with one another as opposed to one to one interviews? The second is more related to the trade union movement in Scotland, and I wondered if there are any reflections on whether you see the Scottish trade union movement, the STUC, as undergoing a transformation from the 1970s and '80s. Whether it's to do with devolution too, as another impact of devolution, has the Scottish trade union movement become more environmentalist, and if so why, and is it connected to that process of deindustrialisation, the transition in the movement? And just a final reflection, it's great to see working class environmentalism actually in action, particularly through Danny's reflections here. So yes, Witness Seminar, do you think it works? Does it- What have you got from it as a panel?

Danny Alderslowe: Do you mean this format?

Saskia Papadakis: *Yes, yes. This panel.*

Danny Alderslowe: Yes, I've already stated, I find it really positive and it's showing like people from different backgrounds researching in different sectors are really valuable to each other. And I find we really want a reflection of society that's sort of like that, you know, where everybody's got something to bring to the table, so to speak. I've absolutely loved this this afternoon. No genuinely, it's been really, really-, I've learned lots.

John Simpson: It's not quite what we expected. It certainly wasn't what I quite expected. I expected a one to one type interview or a small group. But this idea that we can bounce off with the points that everybody is making, I think that's been really worthwhile. I enjoyed that.

***Saskia Papadakis**: Thanks John. Has anyone else got a- Sorry Jo and then Lloyd.*

Jo Pike: I think it's been a really rich experience. And actually you've created a very relaxed environment in which conversation can flow very easily, which is nice for the participants I think, certainly speaking for myself. So I really enjoyed it, and it's been fascinating. Thank you.

Lloyd Austin: I'd endorse all that. I mean to some extent there hasn't been enough time but it gives us a lot more things that we can all say. But I was going to comment on the trade union thing, because I have been involved with Stop Climate Chaos for quite a long time. And we've got a couple of trade unions that are very active members and supportive and work with us on just transition type issues. But they and us are frustrated with other trade unions who are not members, and who are, kind of, let me put it this way, sticking to the traditional engineering concrete-pouring jobs as being 'real jobs for proper men' rather than seeing where the future really is, which is in, you know, a green transition. And so there is definitely pros- And we work very positively with those trade unions we do work with, and it is good to have their voice in the network and so forth. But it is frustrating that there are some within the trade union movement who are kind of saying, you know, oil and gas industries in Grangemouth and all of that need to be protected for good rather than how do we convert this into what they need to be in the future in a net zero economy.

[01:14:53]

Danny Alderslowe: Yes I'm in the Unite, oh sorry.

***Saskia Papadakis:** That's okay, go for it. Who was speaking?*

Danny Alderslowe: On you go.

***Saskia Papadakis:** Yes, and then were you going to say something?*

Stuart Housden: Well I'll go-

***Saskia Papadakis:** Yes, yes, yes, Danny then Stuart.*

Danny Alderslowe: So I'm in the Unite union but just specifically on this week where we had Keir Starmer announce we're all meant to be really happy that we're going to be better at war, and what we're going to produce in the River Clyde. So my group, we made a speech in Glasgow City Chambers in 2009, and it was about how we could evolve the Kvaerner shipyards, British Aerospace, all the people there, to evolve that into, believe it or not, making first class quality eco ferries and making nice renewable things. But just transitioning that death, sort of, culture of war, that gives people jobs and that, because again you meet the cynicism, 'Oh we're going to lose our jobs if these environmentalists get in etc.' I say 'No, actually we're going to create healthier, more economic, ecological jobs for you, it'll be a lot, lot more sustainable for your children's future etc. as well.' And I find it is a sticky one, isn't it, for the unions because they are entrenched in, you know, supporting these paymasters who really don't give a damn about our communities and where we live. And that's the debate we've always got to be good at, and get that message across. So there's a group of us in Unite union that are sort of representing the environment thing and trying to work with other unions and stuff. But again that's time and all that. But thanks for raising it because it is a biggie.

[01:16:29]

Saskia Papadakis: Stuart do you want to come in?

Stuart Housden: In terms of how it's worked, I was unclear, unsure perhaps is a better phrase, how it would work because we come from such diverse sectors. You know the environment movement has commonality but it is also incredibly diverse, different. You know we are diverse and different in terms of our lived experience, our world experience. But I thought actually the discussion was extremely positive and there's so much I've sort of heard and reflected on and learnt from. So I think you've done good, if I could put it that way. To some extent how's it going to be for, you know, the archive and so on? I mean that I suppose is the judge of success. Does it make sense for someone who decides to read or pick it up or listen to it or things of that sort, I guess. So how is it going to be curated I guess is to some extent part of that. So, but it's been enjoyable and very worthwhile and stimulating. I think, I was going to pick up on something Ric said about, you know, Edinburgh, Central Belt focus. And again it's an open cast coal issue. I took a very senior civil servant from Edinburgh out to Muirkirk about fifteen years ago

when there was a big 'what's going to happen to this huge hole in the ground right next to this community, which has also destroyed a European protected site and how is it all going to be fixed, and where was the money going to come from?' And I took this guy round and to be fair it was pouring with rain, it wasn't the sort of bright blue skies and heather clad hills. And he turned to me after this visit, and we'd met some community people and we'd talked to sort of local folk and seen what we were trying to sell which was a restoration programme, and he said to me, 'I see no future at all for communities like this. It'd be better if we dug it all up, filled it in and they moved.' And that guy was, you know, right at the top of the civil service. And he had no vision, he just saw it as a huge problem, and these communities here have lost their purpose, there's no longer any reason for them, was how he saw it. And that was a sort of lesson to me, where I just sort of felt that to me- there was a guy there who gave money from his job as a coal miner to the RSPB to help restore a bit of his community, his redundancy pay, he gave a bit of his redundancy. And I remember it, you know. I just thought, this is awful what this man is telling me. So I just remember that. And that is what we're fighting against, I suspect, to some extent, and will continue to fight against. Lastly about the trades unions, I just remind everyone, the National Farmers Union of Scotland is a trades union, and it fights for what it wants in a very well connected way, and yet it isn't treated as a trades union. And it has immense influence because it's very clever and well resourced. And if we can harness that energy for good things, nature friendly farming, it would be a wonderful, wonderful win. But we struggle. So thanks.

[01:20:07]

Saskia Papadakis: *If you have a very quick point to come in because we're literally at the end. Zarina.*

Zarina Ahmad: Yes, it's quite an important point. And it's to do with trade unions and I have seen a move towards more environmental work and more talking about environmental issues. But what is still lacking is this idea that Scotland doesn't have racism. So there's a lack of anti-racism work. A lack of thinking about racialised, marginalised communities. And it's always an afterthought. And the thing is, it's getting worse, it's not getting better. So I think trade unions have a huge role because they don't- They're supposed to be representing the underdogs, as usual, but they're not. And it's

like, for me, there is this huge gap between racial justice and climate justice. And I will keep on and continue to fight for that.

Saskia Papadakis: *Okay, on that note I'm going to hand over to Jeremy for closing remarks.*

Jeremy Iles: *Yes, okay. Firstly logistics, what's going to happen, Toby has been recording all this and hopefully all the tech's worked, otherwise we'll have to run it all again.*

[Audio ends: 01:21:22]