

A Just & Green Future briefing Scotland



Updated March 2021
by David Bradwell

Background

The Covid-19 pandemic and the necessary public health restrictions have meant challenges to the economy, rising unemployment and a stretched social and health care system. The pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated inequalities across our society. It has thrown into stark relief our reliance on social infrastructure and our infrastructure's ability to cope with demand. All this has happened in the shadow of the climate crisis; in Scotland there is a legally binding target to be a net-zero carbon emissions nation by 2045. As we look ahead, how might these elections play a part in establishing a just and green future beyond Covid-19?

What's the vision?

Looking forward with hope, the Church can provide a vision for society which prioritises decisions which enable better flourishing for people and the planet. This means balancing the need for a strong social infrastructure, properly resourced safe work, and a secure welfare system with policies which help us reach net-zero carbon emissions. These elections present opportunities for authorities to legislate for and encourage policies which can enable us to move forward with this in mind.

Key areas to look out for

- 1. Climate positive recovery funding:** Ensuring that funding for businesses recovering from the pandemic accounts for climate impact and prioritises development which encourages net-zero carbon emissions.

- 2. Healthcare:** A plan for healthcare which enables proper funding of the NHS and social care systems
- 3. Public services:** Properly funded public services
- 4. Transport:** Well-developed public transport systems which encourage safe and clean travel.
- 5. Jobs:** New jobs which support net-zero targets, for example in creating net-zero infrastructure to enable adaptation such as sustainable travel, renewable heat and energy, and energy efficiency, and restoring and planting new forests to create carbon sinks. Living wage-accredited work which ensures everyone has enough to live on.
- 6. Housing:** The right kind of affordable housing in all communities across the country which means everyone has a safe place to call home.
- 7. Addressing fuel poverty:** investing in energy efficiency in existing homes to ensure effective and affordable low carbon heating for all.
- 8. Local Government:** Local authorities with the right kind of resource and responsibility to make decisions which benefit the local community and move towards net-zero.
- 9. Everyone together:** Policies which ensure the poorest and most marginalised in our communities are not left behind as we seek to recover. This means properly funded welfare support, including housing and social care.

COP 26 – Glasgow November 2021

In November, the United Nations climate summit, known as COP26, will be held in Glasgow. It will be the biggest international summit ever held in the UK and will be the most important climate meeting since the Paris meeting held in 2015. The renewed participation of the USA under President Biden has injected new hope and impetus into the talks, and the fact that the meeting is happening here in Scotland means there is an opportunity for politicians and civil society institutions to play a part in the conversations and consider again what more can be done to reduce carbon emissions.

Questions for candidates

- 1.** With COP26 on the doorstep, what policies would support Scotland's focus on climate as well as Covid recovery?
- 2.** How will you ensure that Scotland meets its carbon emissions reductions targets? What impact do you think these changes will have in local communities?
- 3.** What will you do to create green jobs to address unemployment following the pandemic coupled with the need to prioritise green development?

Contact

We would like to know how this guidance was useful and what should be added or changed for future publications.

If you have questions, suggestions or comments please write to:

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Scotland: David Bradwell dbradwell@churchofscotland.org.uk

England: Joint Public Issues Team enquiries@jointpublicissues.org.uk

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