

Build protests and strikes for upcoming Cop26 talks

Via [Socialist Worker](#)

The United Nations Climate Change Conference, better known as [Cop26](#), is fast approaching.

The conference will see world leaders join with politicians, NGOs and businesses in Glasgow to discuss the climate crisis.

But like previous talks, Cop26 will likely fall flat. Efforts are underway to build mobilisations to bring the rage over governments' [climate inaction](#) to the conference.

Organisers hope a protest on Saturday 6 November in Glasgow will bring 50,000 or more people onto the streets. And on the same day there will be demonstrations across Britain.

Organisers hope the London one will be the same size or bigger than the one in Glasgow.

Activists in the Cop26 coalition have been organising in more than 40 city hubs. The coalition includes [trade unions](#), NGOs and climate groups.



Claire is a nurse and part of the Glasgow hub.

She told Socialist Worker that at Cop26, "They'll say a lot, they'll make promises, but they'll do nothing. The conference itself excludes most people, but the protests are an opportunity for people to get their voices heard."

Easier

Salena Williams, from Bristol's hub said, campaigning on local [environmental issues](#) has made it easier to open

discussions about broader issues. “Engaging people on the issues that matter to them has worked to get wider layers of people involved.

“People are scared by what they see on the news but don’t feel like they can do anything.

“Big protests can raise people’s confidence and say if we work collectively, we can make a difference.”

Judy Paskell, a Manchester hub coordinator involved with [Campaign Against Climate Change](#) said, “The global climate strike on 24 September is a critical date.

“After not striking for a while, school strikers need the support of the wider movement.”

Judy also stressed workers must join the mobilisations.

The Scottish government is already worried that ScotRail workers in the RMT union, will strike during Cop26.

We need more militant action to show that trite words from the SNP or Joe Biden won’t fool us.

The [Cop26 coalition](#) has called a day of workplace action on 5 November.

Trade unionists must organise for this date. The best action would be strikes and stoppages. But everyone can do something. Claire stressed the importance of showing solidarity with the Global South. “When we’re out campaigning we get people to think about the Clyde river flooding—whole communities would be washed away.

“There are so many areas across the world where this has already happened.

And many of those who had suffered can’t get to the Cop26 protests.

“Cop26 is an opportunity for us to say we are with them,” Claire added.

Socialists must build big and disruptive protests to rage against do-nothing politicians.

World leaders will prioritise profits over the planet

Arguments are happening at every level of society on how to avert [climate breakdown](#).

Inside the Cop26 conference, those at the top of society will debate stopping global warming while keeping the system intact and their wealthy friends happy.

World leaders such as US president [Joe Biden](#) are likely to push new technology as the solution to the climate crisis.

And some protesting outside the conference might be convinced by this. But socialists say that while new technology itself is not bad, it is useless in the hands of the bosses.



We already know what it would take to cut emissions—[fossil fuels](#) must stay in the ground and be replaced with renewables.

Those in power know this, but they hold up new technology as the only solution because it maintains the system.

The key argument is what must we do to avoid the climate crisis.

Those, including some of the [NGOs](#) who are part of the Cop26 Coalition, will say we should appeal to those in power to change.

But world leaders and policymakers are unlikely to take steps to reform the system.

The conference will host many leaders such as prime minister Boris Johnson, who brand themselves climate champions yet support fossil fuel projects.

These ventures are incompatible with plans to stop temperatures rising 1.5 degrees.

They continue to back the [fossil fuel industry](#) because those in power remain locked into a profit system.

While demands for reforms such as the [Green New Deal](#) should be made, ultimately socialists must fight for more.

Avoiding disaster will take a complete break from capitalism and fossil fuels.

Cop26 protests allow opportunities to make this argument.

Cop26 expense for a ‘facade’

The cost of the Cop26 conference of inaction will be astronomical, with the bill likely to be over £100 million.

More police on the streets, heightened security and accommodation for over 30,000 delegates to the conference will add to the expense.

Clare said the excesses of the conference are all a “facade”.

Cleaned

“The [pandemic](#) meant many services in Glasgow were cut, parks weren’t cleaned, and library services shut,” she said.

“Services haven’t returned. It’s clear the Scottish government

and [Glasgow council](#) want to show the city as its best, for world leaders, but not for us.”

Instead of reinstating these services and employing more workers to clean the streets, the City Council has opted to rely on volunteers to pick up litter.

Community groups have been encouraged to join a scheme, headed up by fast food restaurant McDonald’s, to pick up the rubbish.

Protesters face heavy police presence

Tens of thousands of [police](#) will be deployed daily in Glasgow to protect the conference.

This operation will include thousands of cops that have been specially trained to [suppress protests](#).

Police Scotland said they would take a “human rights” approach to the handling of crowds– but only if they don’t get too effective.

Scotland’s Deputy Chief Constable Will Kerr said that protesters who get too rowdy would face the “fullest range of tactics available.”

Another top cop last week threatened increased action against anything that might “impinge upon the ability of the conference to operate”.