



YOUTH OCEAN & CLIMATE MANIFESTO

WE ARE CALLING FOR A FRESH WAVE OF OCEAN ACTION IN THE FACE OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

This manifesto highlights the calls to action of our generation, on the most pressing issues relating to the ocean and climate crisis. It outlines actions that our leaders must take, for people and for the planet, if we are to have a future.

IT'S OUR LAST CHANCE.
WE NEED YOU TO ACT. NOW.



OUR SIX CALLS TO ACTION

Protect the ocean from **over-extraction of marine resources**. Make 30% of UK seas *highly* protected by 2030 and divert financial government support away from harmful extraction practices.

Reduce **plastic production and consumption**. Adopt legally binding targets and a tax on the manufacture of plastic with less than 100% recycled content.

Champion **environmental justice**. Convene a Citizens' Assembly on Climate & Biodiversity to foster a diverse community of voices and ensure all social impacts of emerging environmental policies are independently evaluated.

Restore and rewild the ocean. Negotiate an international Global Ocean Treaty to protect and restore the marine environment, which ensures at least 30% of the entire ocean will be highly protected by 2030.

Transition from **fossil fuels to renewables**. Stop using fossil fuels and scale-up renewable technologies to become NetZero by 2030.

Value and celebrate **our connection to the ocean**. Increase access to blue spaces, and incorporate Ocean Impact Assessments into policies to ensure the ocean is central in decision making.

THE YOUTH, OCEAN AND CLIMATE SUMMIT

On World Ocean Day in June 2021, almost 100 youth ocean and climate advocates between the ages of 11-18 came together for a landmark summit. Why? Ours is the voice of a generation that will be more affected by climate change than any before us. This is the decade in which the human race has its last chance to keep climate warming below 1.5°C and avert full climate breakdown, whilst also building resilience to the effects of a changing climate, which we are already seeing. The ocean is the beating heart of our planet that is often overlooked in discussions around climate change, but we know that it holds solutions to help us avoid the worst of this crisis. A thriving ocean is central to our future.



During the summit, we focused on some of the most pressing threats facing our ocean and climate: **the extraction of marine resources**; the use of **plastics and our consumer habits**; and our continued reliance on **fossil fuels**. We also discussed ways to ensure a safe, fair and sustainable future where nature – humanity included – thrives, including **environmental justice, restoration and rewilding** and **our human connection to the ocean**.

We are tired of empty gestures and broken promises. We are frustrated by the lack of vision for a better, cleaner, more equitable future, with a thriving ocean at its centre. We are angry at the lack of urgency, and of targets which put the interests of big business ahead of the people you claim to serve. Our Ocean & Climate Manifesto sets out our calls for action, and gives the ocean a voice.

OUR SIX OVERARCHING MESSAGES



EDUCATE

Provide comprehensive education for all ages on ocean and climate literacy and make it accessible for all. Embed ocean and climate literacy into curriculums and support schools in delivery. Education on climate change needs to start younger, reach further up into society, beyond formal education, and be made accessible to everyone - regardless of social demographic. **Education is not just for young people.**



COMMUNICATE

Convey the same urgency and seriousness when communicating about the climate emergency as you have for the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has seen urgent daily communication from governments on an issue of human health, but no human health crisis matches the scale of the impacts that climate change and a degraded ocean ecosystem will have. Use the same sense of urgency and adopt the tools - such as regular press conferences and public updates - which have been so effective during the COVID-19 health crisis.



LISTEN

Be led by the science, and listen to the voices of youth, indigenous peoples, developing communities and other marginalised people who are most affected by the impacts of climate change. We need more channels for all voices to be heard: lower the voting age to 16 by 2023, and create ongoing annual Citizens' Assemblies on Climate & Biodiversity with the ocean at their core, fairly representing people from all social demographics to hear from an array of ocean and climate experts, and to provide direction to decision makers.



OUR SIX OVERARCHING MESSAGES



COMMIT

Publicly and honestly be held to account through short-term goals built into long-term targets. Make bold and ambitious commitments; commit to making 30% of the ocean *highly* protected by 2030 and bring NetZero targets forward. Make progress measurable; use timescales of 1, 2, 5, 10, 15 and 20 years within policies, so the public can track progress and celebrate success, as well as hold politicians responsible for inaction.



SHOW LEADERSHIP

Actively drive a fair, global transition for all. Nations must each take the initiative and act now, with wealthier nations who have led on emissions and consumption taking responsibility, ensuring that the world can move forward together. We need our leaders to collaborate across communities, sectors and countries. Crucially, our leaders must set a positive example in the nations they lead and in their own lives.



SUPPORT ACTION

Provide tailored financial and practical support for companies, communities and individuals, to facilitate adaptation and a green transition - funded by taxes on carbon and unsustainable practices. Governments must tax companies for pollution, emissions and other unsustainable practices. These taxes must fund and subsidise alternatives, ensuring that the sustainable choice is easy, fair and accessible for all.



EXTRACTION OF MARINE RESOURCES



SUMMARY

Fossil fuel extraction, over-industrialised and subsidised fishing, water pollution, and deep-sea mining have catastrophic effects on the ocean. The ocean's finite resources are vanishing in the wake of our human footprint: we need 7.9 billion people to collectively start treading more lightly, and we need big societal shifts to make this happen.

TREADING LIGHTLY: OUR ASKS

To meet human needs whilst relieving pressure on the ocean and marine life, governments and stakeholders must double down their efforts in three main ways:

- **Protect our marine ecosystems from resource over-extraction, with 30% of the ocean to be highly protected by 2030.** We need immediate designation of Highly Protected Marine Areas, which must be enforced effectively. Incentivise no-take zones and blue carbon stores to allow biodiversity to bounce back, and introduce a global moratorium on deep-sea mining until the potential impacts of this activity can be understood and prevented.
- **Divest and reinvest for ocean health and sustainability.** Companies and governments must stop subsidising harmful practices, such as industrialised fishing and fossil fuel extraction, and instead invest in sustainable energy, marine restoration, blue carbon initiatives and creating a more sustainable and prosperous future. This includes supporting workers in the transition to alternative livelihoods by providing training and well-paid, rewarding jobs in the green sector.
- **Value our ecosystems effectively.** Governments must acknowledge the value of the ocean for human and planetary health, and not just as a resource to be plundered. We need greater awareness throughout society of the overwhelming pressure we're putting on complex ocean ecosystems.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



SUMMARY

The destructive consequences of the climate crisis are ricocheting around our world unevenly, disproportionately affecting communities who are least responsible, and with the least resources to deal with the fallout.

We must act as part of a global community - not introspectively, and not as isolated countries. Diverse and knowledgeable voices, such as indigenous peoples and local and small-scale farmers and fishers, must be better represented at the decision-making table. A fair and just transition to a climate-resilient future means prioritising the development of inclusive, accessible and affordable solutions.

BALANCING THE SCALES: OUR ASKS

To deliver climate and environmental justice, decision makers must:

- **Convene an ongoing annual Citizens' Assembly on Climate & Biodiversity with the ocean at its centre, improving representation of minority and vulnerable communities in action on climate change and ocean restoration.** A Climate & Biodiversity Citizens' Assembly - similar to the Climate Assembly UK¹ convened in 2020 - would foster a diverse community of voices and experience who, informed by expert knowledge, can help define avenues for progress.
- **Independently evaluate the socioeconomic and cultural impacts of environmental policies.** Assess who benefits from the policy - and who doesn't - and implement measures to address inequity, enabling climate adaptation for all people, across the globe.
- **Provide financial support to enable all communities, organisations and individuals to make sustainable choices, funded by taxes on unsustainable practices.** Subsidise and fund alternative solutions to make them accessible and affordable at all levels and across all people, to allow us to move forward, together.

FOSSIL FUELS TO RENEWABLES – A FAIR + JUST TRANSITION



SUMMARY

We're moving to a future where burning fossil fuels will soon seem prehistoric. The transition to clean and renewable energy sources is happening, but it's still not happening fast enough.

We urgently need to stop using fossil fuels and scale-up renewable technologies that already exist, and funnel more investment into emerging technologies. We want to see companies and countries that are most responsible for pollution, emissions and consumption paying their fair share and helping to forge a path that under-resourced nations can benefit from.

A CLEAN & GREEN TRANSITION: OUR ASKS

This complex challenge requires collaborative and imaginative solutions from governments.

- **Stop subsidising and using fossil fuels.** Policy must reflect the urgent need to both reduce our demand for energy, and transition to clean energy sources in order to achieve NetZero by 2030. This includes linking companies' tax rates to their fossil fuel use.
- **Facilitate and support the transition to clean and renewable energy.** Redirect subsidies and use revenue from taxes on fossil fuels to fund the growth and research of renewable technologies. Provide grants to ensure that clean energy is attainable for all, and share technology and understanding between countries to facilitate a global transition.

PLASTICS & CONSUMER HABITS



SUMMARY

Our over-consumption of plastics and other materials is overwhelming the planet and its wildlife. Lots of us understand we must use less, but governments aren't acting at the scale needed, and are failing to hold businesses that pump plastic into our environment to account.

It's time to take action on big companies, with sanctions for unnecessary use of single-use materials, and incentives to support a truly circular economy. At the consumer level, we need our leaders to ensure reusable alternatives to plastic are affordable and accessible for all.

BREAKING THE HABIT: OUR ASKS

We need strong leadership from the top-down to ensure our individual efforts do not go to waste.

- **Set ambitious targets to stop unnecessary plastic consumption and plastic waste for 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 30 years ahead.** Deadlines for reducing plastic consumption and improving waste management must be set with clear, legally binding targets to ensure action is taken immediately to reach longer landmark goals.
- **Introduce plastic taxes on all polluting companies with plastics in their supply chains.** By 2023, introduce a tax on the manufacture and use of plastics produced with less than 100% recycled content, with the highest rates imposed on the manufacture and use of virgin plastic. The revenue from these taxes must be ring-fenced to subsidise circular alternatives, support research into new technology and fund conservation and restoration work.
- **Urgently promote and support circular production and consumption systems.** Reduce demand for virgin plastic and enable the shift away from narratives of recycling in favour of circularity.

RESTORATION & REWILDING



SUMMARY

The global ecosystem, of which we are each a part, is reliant on the health of the ocean. Marine conservation has traditionally focused on protection but, in their current form, many of those protections are weak and the 'natural' state we are trying to protect is already damaged and degraded.

Action must be taken to properly protect the ocean and, beyond this, to rewild and restore marine ecosystems, securing a future which allows people to survive and also to thrive, as one part of a healthy, interconnected, global ecosystem.

RESTORING A WILD OCEAN: OUR ASKS

Restoration and rewilding is the step beyond protection that will help secure a healthy future for us all.

- **Commit to ambitious, long-term, legally binding targets to properly protect and restore the ocean, achieved through short-term goals.** Make 30% of the entire ocean highly protected by 2030, enshrining commitments like this in national policy and legislation. Review targets annually to track progress, or lack of action.
- **Cooperate and collaborate to create an international Global Ocean Treaty to protect and restore the ocean.** Use international negotiations (such as the UN High Seas negotiations) as a concrete opportunity to enshrine protection for the ocean on a global scale, critically protecting areas outside of national EEZs.
- **Finance community-led action and research to restore local ecosystems.** This will not only help us to rebuild broken ecosystems, but will foster local connectedness to nature and a sense of stewardship over local environments.

OUR CONNECTION TO THE OCEAN



SUMMARY

Time spent in or near water in 'blue spaces' – be it rivers, lakes or seas – is incredibly restorative; often our most-treasured moments revolve around the ocean, and the water systems which feed it.

It's time the Government acts on the increasingly recognised health benefits of blue spaces, communicates them clearly, considers them in policy development, and protects them as a benefit for all. Improved insight and education is needed to strengthen human understanding of our reliance on the ocean, because when we understand and love something, we protect it.

PROTECTING & PROMOTING HUMAN CONNECTION TO THE OCEAN: OUR ASKS

Decision makers must protect and promote our connection to the ocean as part of a vision for a healthier, happier future.

- **Improve access to blue space for all and increase research on the role of the ocean as a mental health and wellbeing oasis.** Invest in research on 'blue health' and support 'blue prescribing' which helps people connect with the ocean and rivers for their own wellbeing. In England and Wales, we only have formal access to 3% of our rivers; boost access to rivers and waterways to democratise blue health benefits to those living away from the coast.
- **Embed education and understanding of the ocean's role in all our lives – at all ages, regardless of where we live.** Be more vocal about the many ways in which this vast ecosystem supports human existence on earth. Incorporate Ocean Impacts Assessments into policy-making processes to ensure that the ocean remains visible in policy and political discourse.

**NOW IT'S
OVER TO YOU**

**WE DON'T WANT YOU TO TELL
US WE ARE INSPIRATIONAL,
WE WANT YOU TO TAKE ACTION.**

We can see the scale of the challenge we face. As our elected leaders, there is no excuse not to represent and act on the urgent call of the next generation to protect our future.

We are handing over our Ocean and Climate Manifesto, but we are not stepping away from our collective responsibility: we will be watching, and holding you to account.

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GLOSSARY

Biodiversity - The variety of life.

Blue carbon - Carbon captured and stored by marine and coastal ecosystems.

Blue health - Impacts on physical and mental health of being in, on or near water.

Blue prescribing - Prescribed engagement in/with blue spaces for the associated health benefits.

Blue spaces - The sea, coastal areas, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, canals.

Ecosystem - A complex of interconnected living plants and animals, their interactions with each other and with their physical environment.

Equity, equitable - Fair treatment, outcomes and access to resources, achieved by providing tailored support based on need.

Highly Protected Marine Area - Areas of the sea where destructive and extractive practices are banned and only non-damaging levels of other activities are allowed, to protect and restore ecosystems.

Holistic - Relating to the whole of something, or the total system, not just parts.

Inequity - Unfair treatment, outcomes or access to resources.

Marginalised - To be treated as unimportant.

NetZero - When the amount of greenhouse gases removed from the atmosphere is equal to the amount put into it.

Citizens' Assembly - A group of citizens brought together to hear expert information on a particular subject, and to discuss and provide recommendations based on that information. The members are partly randomly selected, but in a way which ensures the group is a fair representation of the population as a whole.

Rewilding - Large-scale protection and restoration of areas, to bring back biodiversity and to allow ecosystem health and processes to recover.

Subsidy - Financial support (cash, grants or tax breaks) given to businesses or individuals.

Sustainable, sustainability - Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

PHOTOS

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