

# OUR COMMON HOME - GREEN NEW DEAL, 29.1.20

**Tiffany Kane, Commonweal**

**Facilitator - Nick Gotts**

(<https://www.common-wealth.co.uk/project-streams/green-new-deal>)

You can see Tiffany's presentation on youtube at:-

<https://youtu.be/9R5ZnQ1EjWU>

## Questions and Contributions

**Sarah** asked why the Commonweal Green New Deal (GND) report took a national approach to public transport, instead of a municipal approach?

**Ian** asked Tiffany what she thought of Labour and SNP GNDs?

**Johnny** said that the rest of the world is capitalist dominated. The problem is highlighted by corporate control of land and energy. How do we overcome their resistance? We also need a number of stages and processes to get to a carbon-neutral economy.

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**Tiffany** replied to Sarah, saying that a local approach is important. The report is motivated by a sense of urgency, which is why national action is suggested. But she agreed that a move to bottom-up structures is necessary.

In reply to Ian, Tiffany said that both the Labour and the SNP GNDs represented steps in the right direction. However, Labour's GND is no longer an immediate possibility and there is an element of window-dressing involved in the SNP's approach. There is a conflict between this and their commitment to the neo-liberal Growth Commission.

In reply to **Johnny** Tiffany agreed that this was the real challenge. We are up against all-year round corporate lobbying. We have to build a movement to counter their power. The example of what is happening in France, where people are prepared to defy the government, is useful.

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**Anne** asked how we can round the document being seen as confined to academics. Can the information be made more widely available and linked to a campaign?

**1?** asked has Commonweal approached SNP and Labour leaders? The trade unions were largely destroyed in the Thatcher years. In order to create a new industrial working class, which can work in the green new industries, the Scottish government needs to re-establish technical education in the colleges.

**2?** asked how likely is the Scottish government to adopt a GND?

**3?** said let communities see local socialism in practice first, and when this is seen to be working, it will have a knock-on effect.

**Pete** said that a political project must be about taking power. North Sea Oil proved not to be such a long-term bonanza for the workers and communities, but for the energy corporations. Both the UK and Scottish governments are committed to continued oil extraction. However, the Leith Walk Campaign showed what was possible, and it placed sustainability at the heart of its campaign. And Extinction Rebellion shows the sort of rebelliousness found in France.

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**Tiffany** replied to Anne, saying she would get in contact with Robin and Craig of Commonweal about making the sources of information in the report more public.

In reply to **1?** she said that John McDonnell had been in contact over a range of other Common Weal policies.

In reply to **2?** she said there are Commonweal supporters within the SNP. They hope to bring the issue of housing at the SNP's spring conference and the GND at the autumn conference. There is also support within the Scottish Independence Convention and Voice for Scotland, as well as some individuals in the SNP leadership.

In reply to **3?** She said acting locally also has its problems. Local councils come under a lot of pressure. This has been seen over the issue of Air B&Bs in Edinburgh. Air B&B resorts to lobbying and the courts.

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**Johnny** said that with the prospect of the Tories in office for 5 or even 10 years it was important to work with local communities.

**Matthew** thanked Commonweal for the work it has done. Even though the cost of Commonweal's proposed GND is estimated at £170B over 25 years, that is only twice what the amount wasted paying off the bankers. Furthermore, a GND could become economically self-sustaining. Matthew is neither a unionist nor a nationalist, but has concentrated his work upon the trade unions, in particular, Trade Unions for a Just Transition.

**Allan** thanked Tiffany for her presentation. In reply to Johnny he said that politics were now very volatile. He did not think that Johnson's government would necessarily last 5 years never mind 10. New parties rise and fall - Macron's En Marche, UKIP and the Brexit Party. Last year the Tories were down to 9%. The electoral coalition the Tories have brought together cannot be satisfied. It can be challenged from the further Right and from the Left.

**Alistair** said that he spent half his time in Inverness. There were going to be 2 meetings taking up different aspects of Commonweal's report. His own work has been as a biologist studying the impact of climate change on the tropics. The tropics are already facing the drastic impact of climate change.

**David** said that Extinction Rebellion is organising a 5 years old Climate Change camp at Moss Morran in July. He thought Commonweal should ask to host an event there. The report could also be brought up at the SNP's citizens' assemblies.

**1?** said the Cop26 conference in Glasgow in November will provide a focus. Johnson wants to take leadership of the Climate Change issue.

**2?** suggested that Anders Polson, the liberal Danish landowner in the Scottish Highlands, might be approached for some funding

**Sarah** said that she cannot see a GND or Scottish independence coming without civil disobedience. And that a GND will only be possible after independence

**Bob** said that we have 10-12 years. This means we have to start taking things over from the grassroots now.

**Pete** said that organising is already taking place for COP26. There are mobilising groups in Glasgow and London. NGOs, Extinction Rebellion and

UNISON are already involved. 'All Under 'One Banner' is already committed to a match.

**Willie** apologised for being later, but that he had just come from a vigil in Craigmillar following a racist attack. A new group Cando is being organised. The connection between migration and the effect of climate change in the global south is very clear.

**Allan** said that the arrangements for the COP26 conference sound like those for the G8 summit in Gleneagles in 2005. Johnson intends to the official delegates to be sealed off, just as they were at Gleneagles. However, this will only highlight their isolation from the majority, just as their antics at the 2019 Davos climate change conference, flying in on private jets. The opposition to the G8 Gleneagles summit spent a lot of time visiting Auchterarder before organising the protest, which the police did everything to stop. He argued that it would be necessary to take the COP26 campaign to Glasgow's local communities beforehand.

**Matthew** said that the COP26 campaign was being raised at the Edinburgh Trades Council, and that Friends of the Earth was also involved. He said that what is needed is a single, but broadly-based coalition.

**Tiffany** said that the Scottish media is in crisis. What Commonwealth needs are more local journalists. The Scottish government also needed to demonstrate what it can do, even under its limited existing devolution powers, in contrast to Johnson's hot air, over climate change.

**Sarah** said that events should also be organised outside of Glasgow.

**Willie** said that Edinburgh May Day Committee is making Climate Change the theme for this year. During the 2005 G8 protests, Craigmillar had organised a camp for those who came from all over the world. This involved a lot of preparatory work in the local community. Civil society has to take over from COP26. Trade unions need to have green reps just as they had health and safety reps. There will be people coming from all over Europe to COP26.

**The meeting thanked Tiffany very much for her contribution and the excellent discussion this had led to.**

**Allan Armstrong**