

CLIMATE JOBS FOR CUMBRIA



**BUILDING A
CUMBRIAN
WORKFORCE
FOR THE CLIMATE
EMERGENCY**

CLIMATE JOBS FOR CUMBRIA

The climate emergency is truly upon us, with droughts, wildfire, flooding and heatwaves across the globe. Cumbria has already experienced the harm this can bring, with multiple major floods wrecking homes and businesses, killing livestock and cutting vulnerable people off from vital services. As the climate crisis worsens, the storms will get worse, and more frequent, and parts of the Cumbrian coastline will be underwater. Working class communities in Cumbria, and across the world, will be devastated by the impacts. We cannot allow this to happen.

The proposed Cumbria coal mine

Burning fossil fuels is by far the main cause of global heating. The proposed new coal mine near Whitehaven would produce 2.78 million tonnes of coal per year at full production, emitting 8.8 million tonnes of CO₂ and 15,000 tonnes of methane every year. Every fraction of a degree of global heating counts. Over its proposed lifetime (until 2049), emissions from the mine equate to around 2,000 extra heat-related deaths globally. That's on top of its contribution to deaths from wider climate change impacts.



Multiple crises for workers and communities

Communities are currently facing multiple crises: soaring rents, food and energy prices, poverty wages and benefits, and vital public services near breaking point. The common factor is the ruthless drive for profit, bleeding households dry whilst trashing our health and our climate.

False solutions and “jobswash”



As the climate crisis accelerates, the cost of living bites harder, and the profits of the fossil fuel companies soar to astronomical heights, the threat of job losses becomes a key weapon for the oil, gas and coal industries. They have a vested interest in pretending that these deadly industries are the only way to protect jobs or create new ones. But this is a lie – there are alternatives that can solve these multiple interrelated crises. We can have secure, well-paid, unionised jobs - jobs that benefit our communities now and build a future for our children.



CLIMATE JOBS, AND A “JUST TRANSITION”

Bringing greenhouse gases down as close as possible to zero will require a huge workforce, creating many thousands of jobs in Cumbria and many millions across the UK, in sectors like energy, construction, public transport, recycling and land work.

These are Climate Jobs – new, unionised public service jobs, which directly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These workers would be publicly employed in a National Climate Service, which both recruits new workers and guarantees training and redeployment for those whose roles have been phased out. The only question is whether we can make this transition to real climate jobs in a swift and fair way – a Just Transition led by workers and communities, drawing on their skills and experience, protecting incomes and livelihoods.



This is what workers, their trade unions and their communities must organise and fight for.

WEST CUMBRIA DESERVES BETTER THAN NEW COAL!

West Cumbria has a proud history - largely based on its coal mines and its sea ports – and we deserve a proud future. The need for good local jobs is not in doubt – job security for the current workforce, worthwhile prospects for young people, jobs that attract, build and retain the skilled workforce of the future.

Despite the greenwash and extravagant jobs claims, new fossil fuels – whether oil, gas or coal – have no place in this scenario. When it comes to Cumbrian coal, the transition of the steel industry away from carbon-based technologies will mean that the market for this coal – already tiny in the UK - will disappear rapidly across the EU as well.



COAL IS OUR HERITAGE, CLIMATE JOBS OUR FUTURE!

Climate jobs for Cumbria

A study carried out for Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS) estimated the number of new jobs needed in key sectors for Cumbria to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2037. Where possible, they identified how many of these jobs would be in the West Cumbria (Allerdale and Copeland). They concluded:

Around 9,000 jobs could be created during a 15-year 'transition period' and 3,800 jobs in the long term, across transport, industry, the retrofit of buildings to improved energy efficiency, renewable heat, renewable electricity and waste. Just under half of these jobs are in West Cumbria. (CAfS report, 2021). Below we summarise these along with some further possibilities:

Buildings and Heat

To meet all our energy needs from renewables, we need to slash the amount of energy required to heat our homes. In Cumbria, the majority of homes have poor energy efficiency, meaning unaffordable bills and cold misery for many residents.

The CAfS study shows that bringing homes and commercial buildings up to an EPC C rating could create an average of **1,350 new jobs over 15 years**. Most buildings could then be fitted with heat pumps which use minimal energy, creating **630 jobs during a 15 year transition** and around **180 long-term jobs in maintenance**. Roughly a third of the work would be in West Cumbria.

But this is only a start. Retrofitting buildings to an excellent standard is labour intensive, requiring a large skilled workforce which would need to be built up over a period of time. During this time, the whole housing stock could be brought to at least EPC C level. The newly skilled workforce would then continue over the longer term, bringing all buildings up to the highest possible level of energy efficiency.

There are many potential supply chain jobs not included in the CAfS study, many of which could be local industries - for example manufacture of heat pumps, triple glazed windows or sustainable insulating materials such as sheep wool, hemp or recycled fabrics.



Renewable Electricity Generation



Cumbria could almost quadruple its renewable energy generation, from a mixture of offshore and onshore wind, solar PV, tidal lagoon and various smaller sources.

This would require an average of **5,747 jobs over a 15-year** transition period, with around **3,500 of those in West Cumbria**. In the longer term there could be **1,709 jobs, including around 1,500 in West Cumbria**. Jobs relating to offshore wind would likely be concentrated around Workington, with significant work out of Whitehaven too.

Some existing jobs would inevitably be lost in the transition to renewables – for example, 400 people are currently employed in offshore gas in Barrow. These would be more than offset by an increase in offshore wind built and maintained from Barrow. But we must organise in our unions now to ensure that transition plans are in place and everyone affected by the transition has secure work to go to.

In addition to jobs estimated in the CAfS study, there is huge potential for more jobs in the supply chain. Up to half of all wind energy jobs are in manufacturing, and much of this could be done in West Cumbria. Many further jobs will be needed to support the renewable energy system by upgrading the grid and building plant-scale storage.

Transport



Improvements in public transport will benefit all aspects of the local economy. Zero carbon transport will require installation of electric vehicle charge points, upgrading of railway lines and rolling stock, sustainable and accessible public transport, and improved cycling and walking routes.



Over a 15 year transition period, **908 jobs will be required across Cumbria for upgrading the railways and 532 jobs in building cycling and walking facilities. 130 jobs could be created installing EV charge points**. There could also be an overall increase in long-term jobs, mainly in public transport, although fewer jobs will be needed in vehicle repair as EVs need less maintenance. And again, there are significant possibilities for manufacturing jobs, not included in the CAfS study.



Reuse, Repair and Recycling



This is one of the most essential sectors if we are to achieve the necessary emissions cuts and live within the limits of the earth's resources. It is also a major source of long-term jobs!

Recycling the majority of domestic and non-domestic waste would lead to a **net gain of around 1,000 long-term jobs in Cumbria**. There are also many opportunities for jobs in repair and reuse of items, and for new industries using recycled materials.

One possible example is the **potential for steel manufacture**, using scrap steel (currently, mainly exported!) and electric arc technology using renewable electricity from local offshore wind turbines. A steel works like this in Cardiff has 500 directly employed workers, and hundreds more contracted workers.

Another possibility would be to use a proportion of directly reduced iron (DRI), using “green” hydrogen instead of coke. Green hydrogen is produced from electrolysis of water using renewably generated electricity. West Cumbria can generate more clean electricity than is needed for local homes and businesses, and it makes sense to use this surplus close to where it is produced.

Land work

Work created by forestry or peatland restoration, natural flood defence provision or nature conservation projects are not included in the CAfS study, but it is clear that some carbon emissions will need to be absorbed through large-scale tree planting and peatland restoration.



As well as creating a large number of good jobs, this can make an important contribution to protecting biodiversity, enhancing flood protection and improving public health and wellbeing.



We will all need to source far more of our food locally, cutting emissions from transportation, storage and packaging. The extensive West Cumbrian arable land can be utilised in a way that maximises food production whilst storing more carbon in the soil. This requires a large skilled workforce, which unlike much current farm labour must be unionised and properly paid.



HOW WOULD ALL THIS BE PAID FOR?

As the CAfS study shows, a lot of this would pay for itself – for example, insulating homes and commercial buildings and fitting heat pumps and solar panels can slash energy bills.

However, to do this properly will require large-scale public investment. This is not optional – the alternative is the far greater cost of infrastructure damage, lost livelihoods and serious health impacts from climate breakdown. Creating climate jobs has many wider economic benefits.

The money is there

And the money is there – only consider the vast sums paid from the public purse in the form of energy bills or at the petrol pump, propping up the staggering profits of the likes of Shell, BP or Exxon. Huge tax breaks for rip-off companies, and lucrative contracts for the private sector divert our money straight into the pockets of wealthy shareholders, leaving us with crumbling services, poverty wages, and dangerously inadequate investment in our green future.

Onshore and offshore wind and solar energy are the cheapest to produce, yet prices are still pegged to the obscene price of gas on the global market. Bringing the energy system into public ownership would enable funding to be directed to rapid build-out of renewables, energy storage and distribution, bringing prices down and creating good work.

Funding a mass retrofit programme from general taxation, free at the point of delivery and using directly employed public sector workers, would be more efficient than the current system of small grants to householders and councils, and would bring most benefits to those most in need.

THE PAST WE INHERIT, THE FUTURE WE BUILD

This pamphlet was produced by Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group, in solidarity with the campaign against the coal mine and in consultation with local activists.



WHAT CAN WE DO?

Given the lobbying power of fossil fuel giants, and a government bent on dividing us by falsely portraying climate action as an attack on jobs, it will take mass organising by workers and communities to turn the tide. It means cutting through the greenwash and misleading jobs promises and making the connections between the fight for decent well-paid jobs and the fight to tackle the climate emergency. It means identifying climate change as the ultimate, dreadful consequence of a system which ruthlessly extracts profit from both workers and nature and leaves us to pay the price.

Learn

- Most of the jobs estimates in this leaflet came from the report *The Potential for Green Jobs in Cumbria*, Commissioned by Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS) See cafs.org.uk
- Also, see *Climate Jobs: Building a Workforce for the Climate Emergency*, produced by the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group (CACCTU) See cacctu.org.uk
- More reasons to oppose the coal mine are at tinyurl.com/ms3abwaz
- Coal Action Network (CAN) is one of several groups providing useful information - coalaction.org.uk/

Organise

- **Join a local or national campaign group** – CAN has a useful list of other groups and organisations campaigning against the Cumbria coal mine and other fossil fuel projects. See tinyurl.com/coalorgs or follow QR code
- **Get active in a union** – the TUC website has a guide to finding the right union for your sector: tuc.org.uk/join-a-union (If you're not in paid work you can still get active in a Community branch of Unite the Union.)
- If you are in a union – take our model motion to your branch. Find it at tinyurl.com/3w396fxb
- Join the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group (CACCTU) via the website at cacctu.org.uk
- Join Extinction Rebellion Trade Union Group (XRTU): tinyurl.com/XRunions
- Many unions have climate caucuses (groups of members who join together to campaign for strong climate policies in their union and in their workplaces and sectors). Contact CACCTU or XRTU for more info.
- Call out greenwash and jobswash and talk about climate jobs at every climate event or union event you attend or organise.
- Support local strikes, visit picket lines and talk about climate jobs.

