



HOUSE

OF LORDS

Environment and Climate Change Committee

Corrected oral evidence: Mobilising action on climate change and environment: behaviour change

Tuesday 7 December 2021

10 am

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Baroness Parminter (The Chair); Baroness Boycott; Lord Browne of Ladyton; Lord Cameron of Dillington; Lord Colgrain; Lord Lilley; Lord Lucas; Baroness Northover; Bishop of Oxford; Lord Whitty; Baroness Young of Old Scone.

Evidence Session No. 2

Virtual Proceeding

Questions 10 - 16

Witnesses

[I](#): Rob Hopkins, Transition Network; Pam Warhurst, Incredible Edible; Dr Shanon Shah, Faith for the Climate.

Examination of witnesses

Rob Hopkins, Pam Warhurst and Dr Shanon Shah.

The Chair: Good morning. My name is Kate Parminter. I would like to welcome you to this first evidence session of our committee's new inquiry into behaviour change for climate change and environmental goals.

The aim of this session is to explore the role of civil society, including community groups and faith organisations, in actioning behaviour change for climate change and the environment.

I would like to remind all attendees that a transcript will be taken and made public. All witnesses will have the chance to review that before it is published. The session is webcast live and subsequently made available via the parliamentary website. I invite members of the committee to declare any relevant interests.

We have three panellists. They are Rob Hopkins, who is a co-founder of the Transition Network; Pam Warhurst, who is the founder of Incredible Edible; and Dr Shanon Shah, the director of Faith for the Climate. You are all extremely welcome. Committee members look forward to hearing what you have to share with us today.

I will open up the questions with a first question to Rob. What motivates people to get involved in civil society activities related to climate change and the environment?

Rob Hopkins: Good morning. There are lots of reasons. I often ask groups that I visit, and I get as many different reasons as places I go to. Here are some of the main ones.

There is a desire for specific local change. People really enjoy connecting to other people. Remember, we are living in a time of an epidemic of loneliness. This kind of work offers an opportunity for people to connect, to find a sense of shared purpose with other people, to get to know their neighbourhood and their neighbours, and to feel that they belong somewhere.

People also get involved because they are terrified about the future of their children and families. Sometimes people get involved because they hear really inspiring stories of change from elsewhere. We will hear from Pam soon, but Incredible Edible in Todmorden has been one of those stories that spreads. The French film "Tomorrow"—or "Demain"—was an incredible bringing together of those stories and was shown all over France in mainstream cinemas for months. There was a follow-up called "Après Demain", which told the stories of people who saw that film and were then inspired to go off and do projects. We should never underestimate the power of inspiring stories.

Sometimes there is a sense that people have tried everything else. They have tried writing to their MP. They have tried those sorts of things, but they have not really worked. Sometimes there is a sense that getting involved in your community and doing stuff at a grass-roots level is a

good counterbalance to more direct action and XR-type approaches. That kind of very direct, confrontational activism can be quite mentally exhausting after a while. To be able to step in and out and into doing constructive things at home can be really good. As I said, there is often a total lack of belief that official channels will do anything other than uphold business as usual.

It is not just about citizens, particularly in France where mayors have a lot more power. I visit places where Transition is being led by mayors, who see these kinds of models as giving them more courage to be ambitious, to form networks with other towns and cities, and to reimagine the economy. I am sure we will come on to some examples of that later. I was recently in Marseille, where the mayor is bringing in a scheme to reimagine how schools feed themselves and is buying land around the city to buy food. That is really ambitious. It is breaking the contract that Sodexo had to supply school meals and doing it as a municipality. Often you see it as something that gives people permission to do things in quite radically different ways.

Pam Warhurst: For me, it is all of the above. Rob has covered the bases there.

It is also about finding the beginning of that thread of hope. It is about feeling that sense of purpose when you get up in the morning and that you have achieved something. It may not be the ultimate thing, and you may not know what the ultimate thing is, but you feel that you are on a road now where you are not a victim and you are starting to be part of a solution. As you progress, you meet other people who are prepared to think outside the box and to be part of that solution.

The interesting conversation is not just about citizens and what inspires them, but about how you maintain that relationship over time. We will probably tease that out. It involves both sides of the social contract, citizen and state, mutually supporting each other in a way that helps to build on that positivity and embracing that collaborative spirit at grass-roots level, which, if not properly harnessed, can split into competition for resource, profile or whatever it may be.

However, the very first step is when people wake up in the morning and feel that they cannot stand this huge weight of an unknowable any more, so positivity and positive action and purpose are what they are looking for. That is why they come to Transition; that is why they come to work at care farms; and that is why they come to Incredible Edible.

The Chair: Thank you. I love the phrase “keeping that thread of hope going”. That is a very powerful phrase.

Can I come on to Shanon? We have had a smaller discussion in our committee about the issue of motivation. The Bishop of Oxford was very clear that, for people of faith, the motivation for action can be very different from others’. Would you like to give us your perspective on this?

Dr Shanon Shah: Yes. It is good to raise that at this point, because there are also overlaps with what Rob and Pam have just said. I was really struck by what Rob said about coming together to act for a common purpose and by a term that Pam used, "relationship", which is really important to people of faith as well.

There are many examples that I could give, but I suppose that the one that ties these different threads together is the work that we do with grass-roots community activists in UK minority faith communities. We have a project that brings together Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in the UK who are interested in making their communities more active in taking action on the climate and the environment.

There is an intra-faith element at work here. The people who come into this project are deeply moved to care for the environment and the planet because of their spiritual and religious beliefs, but when they come together they start to exchange information with each other, so it becomes an interfaith project.

Remember, these are grass-roots community builders. They come from congregations¹ where they feel that there is a gap and something needs to be done. Some of them may feel that there is not enough leadership, either within their religious traditions in the UK or globally, so they have come together to solve this problem. When they come, they often feel isolated or perhaps a bit lost as regards where to go next. Where they find power is in talking to each other and exchanging information.

There is a really wonderful thing that happens. Each person in this project comes in with a particular sense of who is "us". It is their religious communities—Muslims in Britain or Hindus in Britain. But suddenly they start learning from and forming friendships with "them", their Hindu, Buddhist or Sikh friend who is doing climate action as well. Then suddenly a new "us" comes into being. There is the "us" that goes back to their own communities and applies these learnings, but they come in with a bigger perspective as well. That is really beautiful to watch.

What makes it work is that they are not just coming to talk about how wonderful their religions are; they are coming with a problem. They know that there is not enough environmental action in their communities. When they try to problem-solve together, that is really motivating as well. It builds relationships of trust with people who are not familiar and are not quite from their community, but they are all grass-roots activists and they form friendships with each other. There is the model of working within your own community and local context, but there is also the model of working across communities, which is really motivating for a lot of people.

Baroness Boycott: It is great to see you all. That was so interesting.

My question is in two parts. First, what have been the most successful

¹ On reflection, Shanon Shah amended the term "congregations" to "communities".

behaviour change projects delivered by your organisation and the communities you work with? Wrapped up in that is also a question about how much communities themselves produce the projects. When does that become a healthy living circle?

Secondly, what benefits have your projects delivered to reduce environmental and climate change impacts? I will go around in the same order, starting with Rob and then coming to Pam and Shanon.

Rob Hopkins: Could you say the second question again, Rosie?

Baroness Boycott: I know that some of the Transition towns do this. How successful are your projects in working on climate change, reducing people's emissions and heightening their commitment to and willingness to embrace behaviour change? I was very mindful of the fact that you all said that you did not see solutions coming from the Government and that you had to find solutions coming from what you do and your own local thing. I guess that I want to gauge the effectiveness of these projects and the joined-upness. I am sorry, Rob. That is now a really long question for you to answer.

Rob Hopkins: No, that is great. It is a good question.

The beautiful thing for me about the Transition movement is the diversity of responses. It is not like a Coca-Cola franchise, where we sit in some head office and say, "Here is your action for this week". It is as much about giving people tools and the sense of being part of a network. We always say, "You don't pay an annual membership to be a Transition group. There's no requirement like that. The main requirement is that you share your stories". It becomes like a network, now in 50 countries around the world, of communities that are trying things and sharing their stories.

Recently, with some funding from the National Lottery, we started a project called Transition Together, focusing on England and Wales, where we have been giving out seed funding grants to Transition groups. We are giving out anywhere between £100 and £5,000 for different projects. It has been amazing to see the diversity of what people want money for. Some of them want it for projects to combat food poverty. Some are working on mental health challenges and isolation from Covid. Some are working on building group engagement, community engagement, with bigger projects. Some are just trying to keep their Transition groups going. One group applied for a grant of just £100 so that it could have a proper Zoom account to keep things going. Portland in Dorset applied to use it to start some incredible community gardening projects.

Transition Wellington, in Somerset, is doing a phenomenal thing. It started with one food garden, which did really well. That led to its taking on a one-acre strip behind some houses. That did really well. Then the council said, "Look, we've got eight and a half acres over here. Would you like to do something with that?" It did a big consultation and came up with a plan for that. That is now moving forward. Now the council has said, "We've got this 40-acre strip around the side of the town. Would

you like to make a green corridor?" We often talk about positive feedback in climate change as being a bad thing. In Transition, you sometimes see it the other way round, where one thing leads to another.

You asked about climate and the kinds of successful things that we can do. In Bath, Transition Corsham and Transition Bath started Bath and West Community Energy, which has now raised £14 million or £15 million of investment from local people and from the council for renewables. The Bristol Energy Co-op, which came out of Transition Bristol, has done much the same thing.

For me, one of the best things is Transition Streets, which we started here in Totnes. It is based on the idea of how you get street-by-street behaviour change. How do you start? Do you send people a DVD in the post? What do you do? It is a programme where people meet in each other's houses. You form a group in your street, with six to 10 neighbours. You meet seven times. You look at water one week, food the next week and energy the next week. We piloted it here in Totnes, and 550 households took part. On average, they cut their carbon footprint by 1.3 tonnes per house. The national average is 8.5 tonnes or 9 tonnes. They saved themselves £600 or £700 a year.

This model has now spread to Australia, the US and Belgium—all over the place. The thing that was most fascinating about it was that, when people were surveyed afterwards about what they had got out of it, no one mentioned the carbon or the money that they had saved. Everybody said, "I feel part of my community. I feel better connected". For me, there is the promise that, if we get this stuff right, what we are actually doing is building community and bringing people closer together. The carbon savings stuff is almost a by-product that nobody notices.

Baroness Boycott: Thank you so much. Can I ask you one quick question? I know that you and I have talked about this in the past. You mentioned the need for storytelling. Is there enough storytelling to convey what all these things mean? I know that we talked when we did that event, but do schools do enough to empower children to tell their own stories?

Rob Hopkins: We talk about Utopias and dystopias. What we need now is what people call Thrutopias, which are the stories of how people started in 2021 to build what came next. Some people are starting to do that. That is what Transition groups do on the ground. Whether it is just planting some trees or a small garden, whether it is a currency project or really ambitious things, which I am sure we will talk about, that I have seen in different places, they give people a taste right now of what that future could be like.

We get so stuck. Mariame Kaba, who is an incredible activist in the US, says, "We live in a system that has been locked into a false sense of inevitability". Stories can break us out of that. That is why the Swedish Government have a role called chief storyteller, whose job is to bring to life the day-to-day realities of living in a post-carbon world. Education

needs to be training us to do that. Everything needs to be about our bringing to life a different kind of future from the one that currently seems to be on offer.

Pam Warhurst: I will start off with more of the above. From my point of view, it is about how you find the end of the thread that allows people who are not normally engaged, who perhaps do not read newspapers that tell them about these things or watch television programmes that make them aware of what is happening, to participate and, going back to what I said before, to see themselves as part of the solution. That is why we just do food. Our calling card is, "If you eat, you're in".

Just like Rob, we do not have a central core. We do not have a hierarchy. We do not have a membership subscription or anything like that. What we do is tell stories. We tell stories based on things you can point at. There have been enough reports and strategy documents. There has been enough of that. What we want is demonstrable examples of how we can do things differently collectively.

That is why we started propaganda gardens 13 years ago. It was kind of about guerrilla gardening, but that felt a bit too on the edge for a lot of people who really cared and wanted to transform how they lived their lives around food. Of course, if you start doing stuff around food, you start doing stuff around health, planning and a lot of other areas that ordinary folks do not rub up against in their everyday lives, but they do rub up against food.

Propaganda gardens are very public places, often in the public realm. People have used their own seeds, energy and resource to turn them into demonstration plots of what can grow in that locality, not to feed the rest of the locality but to demonstrate what ordinary folks can do around food there. Over time, they reconnect with seasonality. They reconnect with biodiversity. They reconnect with their neighbours. They have not spoken to them for donkey's years, but they are now having a chat with them and asking, "Do you remember if that's how a Brussels sprout grows?" or whatever else it might be. That free flow of allowing citizens to participate in something positive is the strength of how you roll these things out. They are not Elon Musk flying off somewhere. They are small, discrete actions that demonstrate the power of small actions and that, collectively, we can start to make changes.

So what happens? Take Todmorden. There are thousands of people all over the place, and all over the globe. We have just produced a book called *Seeds to Solutions*, which tells the story of 35 of our groups, some in Australia, some in France and some in Argentina. These are not huge groups. They are just people who woke up in the morning and thought, "Things have got to change. I'm going to start doing that".

So we have a *Seeds to Solutions* book that starts to show people how things can change. Most of them start changing through propaganda gardens. Whether it is in Conwy in Wales, Perth in Australia or Todmorden in England, people take over public places, sometimes with

permission and sometimes without it, grow food on them and put signs there. That is food to share. That is a different relationship, which they have started by saying, "I want to share with you. These are my gifts. Shall we start that conversation?"

With propaganda gardens, you do not have to have a model of "We'll do things to people all their lives". If you start to trust people and invest in their ability to be trusted, you see that their spending patterns start to change.

Incredible Edible is based on three propositions. First, create the propaganda gardens and edible landscapes—in other words, redefine your infrastructure and make it edible and green. Secondly, understand that people do not know how to do that, but that loads of people have skills, whether it is miners in Wigan who know how to grow tomatoes and potatoes or anybody else. Start conversations in your community. It does not cost anything and actually releases a huge sense of pride. Finally, start to think about the pound in your pocket and how that can create sticky-money economies if you invest in the local cheese in your local market, as opposed to things flown all over the planet.

When you start propaganda gardens, those other elements of the model, if you want to put it that way, start to come into play, simply through the way in which people are living their lives. That, for me, is the strength of Incredible Edible. It is not a huge top-down initiative. It is very much about trusting the people. They are investors in the future, not just volunteers. We can all be patted on the back for being community activists. It is very tedious, because what we are trying to do is to demonstrate a more positive, kinder prosperity through what we do.

The propaganda gardens, which are probably the greatest success of Incredible Edible, result in more people thinking that they can start small businesses on their local market, selling their street food, selling their produce, starting their smallholdings or whatever it may be. Ultimately, what they are doing on place is redefining that sustainable development model. Not once have they have talked about sustainable development, which is a put-off, and not once have they talked about things that they just do not understand, but food they do.

The storytelling about what ordinary folks can do, starting with growing and sharing, and running through to learning, passing on gifts and, ultimately, the creation of an economy that is more localised and demands changes in how it is invested in—the reinvention of market towns, for example—is really important. I chair a town deal. It would be great to see that really simple model of sustainable development, initiated by the community, for the community and for communities that are yet to be. That is one of the great examples of what Incredible Edible has been able to achieve, just by people waking up and thinking, "I want things to be different with food, and this is where I start".

Baroness Boycott: Thank you so much. Shanon, we come to you now.

Dr Shanon Shah: In order to answer this question, let me give a bit of background to how we work at Faith for the Climate. I like what Rob said about being a network and not necessarily imposing one way of doing things on the different members. We are a network. We are not dogmatic about how we define faith. It is basically a network that is open to anyone who is inspired by their faith, whatever it is and however they define it, to take action on the climate crisis. We are also not dogmatic about how they define that action, what they want to do and what scale they want to work at.

We are also not dogmatic about what membership means in this network. In the interfaith space, the question of membership can sometimes be a sticky one that prevents some people from getting involved. We think about membership in a fluid way. You can be an individual. You can be an organisation. You can belong to a community. You do not have to register. There is no fee. You just sign up to the e-news. You are a member. You get to find out about our events and come to them and to work together.

This model allows people to be specific enough. It has to do with faith communities and with climate, but it also allows people the flexibility to think, "What works for us?" The project I talked about before—the capacity-building project for Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in the UK—is funded by Religions for Peace UK, but we do not play a role in defining what the capacity builders do. They come to us, because they have ideas about what needs to be done in their communities and what works for them. What we provide is a convening space for them to come and share ideas, to get feedback, and perhaps to get support with producing resources and organising events. However, they take these projects back to their communities. They are the experts, really. They know what works. They know where the waste is.

For example, the Muslim capacity builder we work with thought, "I want the mosques I work with to go plastic-free during Ramadan", the holy month when Muslims fast from daybreak to sunset. Previously, lots of plastic cutlery and packaging that they had in the mosque would have been used at the gatherings for fast breaking. He thought, "I want our iftars—our fast breakings—to be plastic-free". That is one of the projects that he spearheaded when he was part of this project.

How did that become a success? With the learnings and exchanges that he had within this group, he learned that you have to make the connection with why we reduce plastic. It is not just about environmental benefits. It is about health benefits. It is about savings. It is about being a role model to your children and grandchildren, your mosque community and so on. That was very specific and relevant to the needs of the Muslim communities he was working with.

With the Sikh groups we are working with in the UK, there was another entry point. In the last year or two, it was the 550th anniversary of the birth of the founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak Dev Ji. For the 550th Gurburab, as it was called, they embarked on tree planting. This was a

sacred act for Sikhs, but they also connected it with environmental conservation and found partnerships within the UK that worked for them. Lots of Sikh communities within the UK started partnering with the Woodland Trust to do tree planting, connecting something that is sacred and relevant to them with something bigger and involving a partnership with another group they had never worked with before.

With the Hindus, it is different. It was not about a specific event. It was not about a specific thing to do with temples. It was about finding supporters outside temples. It was about finding support from young Hindu professionals and students who wanted to do things like organise litter picks. So they did. Again, it is about connecting this to something bigger. It is not just about picking litter off the streets. What does this have to do with our larger patterns of consumption in cities? What does this have to do with environmental and racial justice within the UK? What sorts of pollution do we see in certain parts of the country that we do not see in others?

An interesting point that Rob raised was that community working is a counterbalance to the more exhausting direct action and activism that we see from groups such as Extinction Rebellion. We find that even within the Faith for the Climate network different people are interested in different things. Many of our Buddhist members are members of the Buddhist chapter of Extinction Rebellion, for example. Even then, they bring something else to that. In addition to direct action protest, they bring meditation. They bring Buddhist practices and resources to those things. When they share those sorts of insights and information within this group of Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh capacity builders, where they meet every month, they make connections between the act of going plastic-free in their mosque and attending a demonstration by Extinction Rebellion. They see the storyline. They see how it is all connected.

Maybe it is not just one story. I am reminded of a wonderful TED talk by the Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. There is the danger of a single story when we impose one way of being—one theory of change—on everyone. There are many different stories that work for many different people. It is about how we share those stories and our successes with each other, and perhaps our failures as well. The hallmark of the project is that people are open about sharing their failures and challenges. So that becomes part of the story.

Those are the projects I can think of that have been successful and can be built on.

Baroness Boycott: Thank you so much, everybody.

Lord Lucas: You talk about people getting together and doing incredible things. How does that become many more people just regarding that as ordinary? How do we make the transition from something that has a real core and momentum to it, with people who are convinced, to it just being the ordinary thing to do? My particular memory of a Transition town is a beautiful community orchard with the ground carpeted with rotting

apples. Everything had been done to make things possible, but clearly the community was not part of it. We need to see change on a community basis, not just on a minority basis.

Pam Warhurst: It drives me mad to talk about best practice and case studies. This needs to be about how we create a "new normal". I hate to say that, because we have been talking about it for the past two years, but I was talking about it before. We do that by shaping the frameworks of society around people's ability to achieve these things, to be incredible everywhere, to embrace the ethics and the ethos of the Transition town movement everywhere.

Some examples are to do with health. Years ago we started taking up prickly plants around hospitals and health centres that people could not eat and planting stuff that they could eat, whether that was berries, herbs, vegetables or whatever. That was then embraced by certain members of the health profession, doctors and the like, who said, "Why don't you come in and transform the parking lots around doctors' surgeries into places where people can grow food, so that when they come to visit their doctor they're thinking health and food, not illness and prickly plants?"

We started conversations with the NHS Confederation and other players at a strategic level in health to say, "Why are you still building hospitals and health centres surrounded by things you can't eat, when you're running multimillion-pound 'Eat 5 A Day' campaigns? Shouldn't you be redefining your asset base around health and not around illness?" They said, "Yes, that would be great".

It is the idea of making sure that you do not have a token plot somewhere at the side of a hospital but you do what NHS Orchards and a lot of other people are starting to do now but were not doing 13 years ago, which is planting food and associating our health service with good food. It is bending the budgets within the health service to support more local supply chains and creating support for community kitchens. All these things are about elements of sustainable development and climate change that led to impoverished health in the population but can be turned around and led by our health service.

The same is happening with many of the people in local government, who recognise that they cannot maintain the public realm as they used to maintain it and are now looking for ways of getting more productive use out of it. We would say that you need to repurpose the public realm so that people can grow food on it, not because you have an enlightened leader of a local authority but because people need to be able to nurture their communities in the future much more easily. Why would you have an underresourced public realm when you could actually bring that in, starting to have a conversation about what that public realm's purpose is and how state and citizen together can start to move?

I could go on. I will not, but there are lots of ways in which the framework makers of our lives can look at and listen to what people are

saying on the ground collectively, whatever the badge is—Transition, Incredible Edible, social care farms. It does not matter; we are all on the same road. We can start to make it a lot easier for us all to live differently around food—you could say the same about energy—over the next 10 years. We need to do it fast, because we do not have much time.

Rob Hopkins: I would add a couple of things. First, we need these stories everywhere. We need the permaculture garden in Albert Square. Ambridge started a Transition town in 2008. We need this stuff to be in the background of everything every day. We need it in video games. I was part of a conference with Ubisoft recently about how we bring this stuff into the background of video games so that it is just the world that we are running around in.

The other thing I would add—maybe we will come on to this—is that when we have talked about behaviour change, we have put too much emphasis on citizens doing things. In the 1970s in Amsterdam, when it was still full of cars, the emphasis was not on individual behaviour change but on building a new infrastructure. If you build a new infrastructure, the behaviour follows.

If you build an infrastructure so that people do not need a car, they will move away from the car. If you build a new infrastructure so that hospitals now supply their food from a network of gardens and farms around the city, that is the new infrastructure. Hopefully, we will talk a bit more about this.

I have seen some great examples where Transition groups are building the new infrastructure. A few years ago the Transition group in Liege in Belgium came up with a great question. What if, in a generation's time, the majority of food, even in Liege, came from the land closest to Liege? They started a project called the Liege food belt. They have now started 27 co-operatives. They have raised €5 million from local people investing in it. They have shops in the city centre. The municipality now uses this model to reimagine how schools, hospitals and universities procure their food.

When you put that kind of infrastructure in place, it is deeply transformative, and behaviour change becomes so much easier. My suggestion is to support the building of a new infrastructure, because that is what really unlocks behaviour change. If you build a system where there is demand for the apples in the orchard where they are currently lying on the ground, and you have a hospital that wants those apples because it will use them as part of its food procurement, you create a cycle where it all really starts to work.

The Chair: Thank you for those reflections. It echoes very much some of the comments we had the other week from the Behavioural Insights Team about upstream changes needed to make things really happen.

Lord Cameron of Dillington: I declare an interest as a retired member of a family farm. I am also on the board of an airport parking and data

business.

To some extent Lord Lucas has just asked my question. You all have community agendas, which bring people together as a club, and then you transition or morph into something that has extra beneficial activity. Obviously, we are having a conversation about climate change here.

Do you have anything more to add to what you have already said? Is it harder to get civil society as a whole, including those who might be climate sceptics and those who probably just do not care, to engage with the climate change agenda? Do we all have to start community efforts activity and then morph the club into a beacon for climate change? How do we get wider society involved, who are perhaps slightly sceptical about all this?

Pam Warhurst: One is storytelling. Another is recognising that people will do things for the place they call home. How do we enable people to improve their home environment: that is to say, their neighbourhood, their streets, on their way to school, the doctors or whatever else it might be? Quite frankly, because Incredible Edible is just about ordinary folks, it does not matter what newspaper you read. You just wake up in the morning and you care about your family's future.

First, you have to trust that people are not there to create bad futures for their children. They just do not know how to do it. Two, you absolutely need to listen to the demonstrators who have been in existence across the Incredible network or Transition towns or whatever and change the rules of engagement between state and them. Rob is absolutely right that the rules of engagement need to change for more people to become engaged.

The evidence of the thousands and thousands of people who are living their lives differently around food is that you really do not have to manage that. You just need to tell them stories about that. You need to give them the tools of the trade for that. Some of that is about recognising that we are splintered at a grass-roots level. Therefore, how do we bring together around the place we call home the ideas about community energy, local food and men in sheds, creating the infrastructure so that other people can benefit from it? The library of things is needed in many communities. These things exist in isolation but are not brought together around place.

I think we have huge opportunities with the deal programme. We have huge opportunities to invest in the north, or wherever else the Government's initiatives are, to put in a place where people can gather, collaborate and come up with their own priorities. They can then say, in partnership with the people they have elected or who work in the anchor institutions, "This is what we'd like to make sure that the rest of our street could participate in this or that all schools could participate in this". There is a huge amount that could be done.

To some extent, it is how we engage with our citizens. I talk about our citizens and not our volunteers. There is a sense of being second-class, or

small or insignificant, when you are a volunteer. Actually, we are all players in this. We are all citizens in this. We just choose to live our lives in different ways.

I would change the narrative about volunteer and citizen. I would talk about social investor, community investor or whatever. That sends messages out there that we are taking this seriously.

We also need to listen to the private sector. We are now working with Compass, one of the largest hospitality groups in the UK. It completely wants to change its culture in order that its business model can shift to one that is at one with what citizens like Incredible Edible people are about.

There is much to be gained by working across private, public and community sectors to get the best from each, and on place to start to shift our priorities and build that kind of prosperity.

Lord Cameron of Dillington: Thanks very much. Shanon, how do you attract the climate change sceptics to your groups and get them involved?

Dr Shanon Shah: The Faith for the Climate Network is self-selecting. We do not attract lots of climate sceptics. The people who come to this network know that there is an issue and want to do something about it. What I have learned from them is that we are perhaps underestimating how much the British public care about the planet, the environment and the climate, and how much they want to do something. What is really harmful is the lowest common denominator model of action where, if you are an individual, all you need to do is turn off your lights and do not use a plastic water bottle, and everything will be fine. This is a slippery slope because it creates unrealistic expectations, where everyone thinks, "Oh, if I just do my little bit as an individual, everything will change".

I completely agree with Pam and Rob that there is a false framing of what behaviour change means. Often we collapse it into individual lifestyle, when what we need now is society-wide transformation. That requires behaviour change at the individual level, sure, but it requires people to work together as well. It requires the state to do something to facilitate these changes and to come in where individuals find that their actions are limited. It is a society-wide transformation that everyone has to be a part of.

Seeing that this change is happening at all the different levels will mainstream and inspire people to act. It will be at the level of individual life within their communities, within our national political leaders and among our business leaders so that everyone is doing something for this society-wide transformation.

I have heard that people think, "What about my own hypocrisy? I'm driving a car. I haven't recycled as much as I could". Working with religious communities, everyone from every single faith that I have

worked with brings something to this equation, which is the idea that it is okay to not be perfect and to make mistakes. We all make mistakes; we all fall short. But in every faith tradition, whether it is the Dharmic faiths, the Abrahamic faiths, or other indigenous faiths that we work with, there is the idea that you can come back, you can try again, and you can try again and do better. You will fail—we will all fail, because we are human—but that is why we work together. We cannot all do this alone.

There is this wonderful combination. You have power within yourself to act. There are things that you can do as an individual, but there are things that you cannot do and that you must do with other people.

There are structures that have to change as well. I have mentioned the minority faiths that we work with a lot, but we also work with lots of mainstream Christian denominations who have an analysis of structural sin. What is the climate crisis? What is economic injustice? These are all structural sins. Structures have to change as well.

I go back to the point that we cannot underestimate that people actually want to do something and they want to change, but we need this new narrative of society-wide transformation.

Lord Cameron of Dillington: Thank you very much. Rob, do you have anything to add?

Rob Hopkins: Yes, just a couple of points. In answer to your question, my experience is that you work with the people who already care. If you are going to invest loads of time trying to convince someone who is really sceptical about climate change that they need to get involved in Transition, you would be far better spending that time identifying the people around you who care, getting together with them and getting on and doing stuff.

We know now, from survey after survey, that constantly around 80% of people strongly agree that we need urgent action on climate change, but it needs a clear steer from the Government and a clear narrative, where they are not saying on the one hand, "Yes, climate change is the challenge of our time", and then expanding airports and opening new coal and oilfields. If it is an emergency, we need to be acting at all levels as if it is an emergency.

To bring in at this point a little of what Extinction Rebellion might call "tell the truth", the average carbon footprint in the UK is about 8.5 tonnes today. By 2030, if we are going to stay below 1.5 degrees, it needs to be 2.5 tonnes, and by 2050 it needs to be 0.8 tonnes. The really important thing is that if that feels as if we are being dragged away from something irreplaceable, like a child who has had too many sweets at the end of a birthday party and who does not want to come home, we are not going to do it.

The only way it will happen is if, in 2021, we can cultivate, culturally, a longing for a different future; if we can tell stories about a low-carbon

future that are so exquisite, delicious and enticing that that is what we are going to commit to. Every step must feel like a move towards something rather than a move away from something. We have to start looking at the strategies for our cities and our businesses much more holistically. We have to look at affordable housing and urban gardening, as Pam does in her work, as being part of a mental health strategy, a physical health strategy and a biodiversity strategy. All this stuff needs to join up.

We know from a recent survey that 80% of people who work in North Sea oil and gas would much rather work in the renewables sector. People are ready to make this shift, but it needs the storytelling and the leadership.

I will just tell one tiny little story from an amazing town that I visited in France called Mouans-Sartoux. It is about half an hour inland from Nice. A few years ago the French Government said that about 20% of food in schools needs to be organic. They said, "Well, if 20% is better for our kids than zero per cent, let's just go all the way to 100%". The municipality compulsorily purchased land on the edge of the town to create a food garden to supply all the food for the schools. They changed the culture of how the food is produced. The kids go to the school and are part of growing the food and part of cooking the food.

They found that it led to all kinds of unexpected behaviour change in parents. They found that 60% of families, who had never bought organic food before, started buying organic food because the culture started to shift. When you take bold leadership and you tell the story, you are consistent with your story and you build a new infrastructure, you unlock all kinds of unexpected behaviour change, whether people agree with climate change or not, frankly.

Could you say that you have to believe in climate change to think that that project in Mouans-Sartoux is a good project? As Pam said, if you love food, you are in. If you care about traditional farming, food and all that, it all matters. We need to broaden this out from whether people believe in climate change or not.

Lord Cameron of Dillington: Thank you very much.

The Lord Bishop of Oxford: I really am inspired. I have a couple of declarations of interest. Of course, I am a representative of a faith organisation, the Church of England. As you talk, I am rapidly reimagining what the stories you are telling might do for local parish churches. I have worked with Shanon and Faith for the Climate in different ways. I very much support what they are doing.

Pam, it is not a declaration of interest, but I have to say that I am from Halifax. I was a vicar in Halifax for nine years. I was just immensely proud whenever I read about Incredible Edible. It was amazing.

Part of our role is to hold government to account and to make suggestions to government. How might government better work with civil society and with faith organisations to enable behaviour change for

climate change and the environment? How might government policy evolve better to support the kinds of objectives that you have?

You have given us some examples of that already. Shanon, you have just said something very interesting about structural sin and transformation, so I will start with you.

Dr Shanon Shah: Thank you, Bishop. It is wonderful to see you here in this capacity as well.

I would like to return to a previous question about the challenges that we face in mainstreaming behaviour change. I find that in working with faith groups—I see this even within the Faith for the Climate network—there are structural barriers to participation. It is not one size fits all. They do not all have the same barriers or the same challenges. Working in the faith space, a lot of the time people who belong to minority faiths in the UK are also racialised minorities or they come from immigrant backgrounds, and they lack resources.

The kinds of people who get to occupy spaces of leadership and who can become community spokespersons that the Government go to might have come to that position as a result of certain kinds of community struggles—power struggles within communities. It is important to recognise that there are different levels of leadership in every single community that we work with.

We definitely work very well with the formal leaders in Faith for the Climate, but we also recognise that there are emerging leaders such as students, young people, women and people from working-class backgrounds. Within Christian denominations there are people of minority-ethnic backgrounds. They help us to join the dots between what is action on climate change and what is climate justice. It is not just working on climate change. We have to work on social justice as well. For a lot of them, climate justice is racial justice, gender justice and economic justice. They are indivisible.

Again, this kind of language, I suppose, can get politicised in a certain way, but I go back to my previous point. We are underestimating how people in the UK see the concept of social justice, the kinds of changes that they want to make and the kinds of responsibility that people are willing to take on to achieve society-wide justice, not just within the UK but around the world.

I came into post in March, just before the Coronavirus lockdown. Because of Covid and climate we were making all sorts of connections between the causes and impacts of the Covid crisis, the climate crisis and the poverty crisis, and how they were all driven by pre-existing economic injustice and other forms of injustice. What surprised me was that there are actually obligations that we can hold the UK Government to account for—for example, their obligations to engage with and educate the public about the environment and climate.

We are signatories of the Aarhus convention, where public participation on environment, climate and other matters is paramount to fulfilling the terms of this convention. We have just been the hosts of COP 26 and we made lots of amazing announcements, but one of the commitments that the Paris Agreement calls for from Governments is public participation—action on climate empowerment. It is right there in Article 12. The UK Government need to communicate the pre-existing obligations better to everyone as well as to themselves.

I think this will have a multiplier effect. There are responsibilities that the state needs to take. I do not see this as a one-way relationship. We have seen the impacts and the power that citizens' climate assemblies can have. I do not know if you watched the documentary "The People v Climate Change" a couple of weeks ago. This is where effective partnership can happen. For me, it is how I leverage upon this as a citizen, as an activist and as a resident within the UK's own obligations, but then how can I step in and step up as well?

Rob Hopkins: I would say, first, tell the truth, be consistent. If it is an emergency, act like it is an emergency across the piece. It is also important to massively scale up funding to this sector. So far, we are talking mostly about stuff done by volunteers. I was part of writing a paper that went to the European Union. If you are serious about the citizen's role in the climate pact, you need to resource communities. The National Lottery's recent community climate action fund was hugely oversubscribed. Many communities spent lots of time and resource on what turned out to be unsuccessful planning applications. Even small amounts of input and money can make an enormous difference to what groups can do. LEPs will put money in to support business. We should be taking exactly the same approach to supporting community-led activism.

I am part of a project in Totnes called Atmos, which I do not have time to talk about here. It is the most ambitious community-led development project in the country. It took the Community Right To Build order powers given to communities under the Localism Act and raised over £1 million, and hundreds of thousands of community hours were put in to develop the most ambitious community-led development scheme in the country, only to get gazumped at the last minute by a private developer, because this country does not have a right to buy as there is in Scotland. If we are going to give communities powers, they need to be real powers that they can actually use.

We need to look at what Preston City Council is doing with its idea of insourcing. Rather than outsourcing everything, we need to change tendering processes so that communities and small businesses can apply. Rather than one big contract, you break it into smaller contracts.

We need to be looking at a different economic model as has been done in the one I mentioned in Liege. I see many places now in Belgium and France where Sodexo is being put on notice that its contract for hospital and school catering will run until the end and then that is it. "Then we're going to do things differently around here". We need to be doing all that.

Through the Transition movement, a community energy strategy was produced in the last days of the last Labour Government. It was about the role that community energy can have, and really visionary. Communities would raise money. The feed-in tariff would support that. Communities could raise investment. Then the feed-in tariff changed and a lot of those energy models were trashed.

We need to look back to things like that. Communities can do an enormous amount as volunteers. If you rely on those movements to be driven by volunteers, you will end up, inevitably, with largely white, middle-class movements, because those are the people who can volunteer. Those are the people who have the time, the capacity and, frankly, the life experience, so if you try to change things, things might change.

First, we need to support Transition groups and other community groups to think more entrepreneurially. How do we turn these ideas into projects that can create work? In my town we started a brewery. We could have started it as a Transition brewing project and then given the beer away. Actually, we now employ 13 people who can feed their families and pay the mortgage. That kind of stuff is really important. I could go on and on, but I am looking at the time and thinking that you want to hear from Pam, too.

Pam Warhurst: We are all on the same road. The interesting thing is that we all started by working one to one with people in communities. Now, it is a no-brainer. We know what we need to do. We just need to wake up in the morning with the will to do it. I am quite sure that nothing you have heard here today is in any way what you did not already know.

So what would I do? What would I like from government, accepting that I am 200% behind everything that has just been said? First, I want to repurpose the public realm. I want to have a conversation about the rights of the citizen to grow and nurture their communities in that public realm. The idea of having to rely on somebody in a local authority, health authority, prison authority or whatever it might be to wake up in the morning and feel good about themselves and say, "Yes", cannot be right. We need to open up a discussion about citizens and their rights to their public realm, funded through their taxes. That is one thing.

We need to enable the NHS and the leaders in the NHS, who cannot possibly cope with another crisis like this in the same way we have coped with Covid, to do something about population health. That is to use their asset base and their funding streams to invest in more localised net-carbon solutions. It is thinking about how they can grow in their public realm and support their communities through community kitchens and the things that I have talked about.

That involves not just a one-off but changing the rules of engagement around NHS spend. You can apply that across the piece. It is also about saying to every government department, "What land do you have that you could release? What assets do you have that could support

communities not to have to be victims"—I talked about victims right at the beginning—"but to be part of a collective solution?"

There are loads of examples. It would include the use of church land. There is a lot of that out there. There is some confusion about what is and is not in play. Would it not be great if we started to take this really seriously and said, "We know what obstacles face citizens in building up prosperity. Our solution to that in this department is that we'll remove this, or that, and we'll start shifting boulders and allow people to do it"?

I had a conversation yesterday with Compass, which is a huge hospitality business working across defence and schools. It is seriously going to go net zero by 2030. People are sitting round the board table and saying, "Right, defence estates, how are you going to do this? Don't tell me why you want to do it. Tell me how you are going to do it—and you need to be doing it fast". That is exactly what it is doing. That is the mentality that we would love to see across government departments, joining up those dots, whether it is at a national, regional or local level, so that I am not fighting my corner with the city region or the combined authorities on something that should be a no-brainer when it comes to people being able to nurture their own communities, reinvest in biodiversity and tackle the climate crisis.

Lord Lilley: I am confused. Do you agree that this generation needs to make sacrifices to enable future generations to have a better standard of living than they would if we continue to emit carbon? If so, are you trying to persuade people to accept those sacrifices, or have you, as your rhetoric suggests, found a way of avoiding that: "You can all be more prosperous by growing a bit of food on NHS land or church land"?

Secondly, if we are all to do things locally, which is a nostalgic idea that has appealed to people ever since the 19th-century reaction against industrialisation, we are effectively saying, "Let's not trade with the rest of the world". I declare an interest. I am founder and former chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Trade out of Poverty.

The best thing that poor people in poor countries can do is to export food. They are exporting sunshine when they export food, flowers, vegetables or fruit to us, but we are saying, "Oh no, that's bad. We mustn't let that happen. We must grow it all locally". Do you see a conflict between globalisation and the localisation that you advocate?

The Chair: They are good questions, if not short, but I would be keen for one of you to pick up the challenge.

Rob Hopkins: First, we need to redefine what we mean by "prosperous". It is going to be very hard to maintain prosperity in a 2-degree world, or even in a 1.5-degree world. We need to move on towards well-being, happiness and biodiversity as measures rather than purely GDP.

In terms of local and global, I do not think anybody here or in the movements on this kind of thing is saying that somehow everything will be produced locally—that Birmingham is going to produce its own frying

pans and laptops. That is not going to happen. The reality is that at the moment, to make it look like some economic activity is happening, we are just shifting stuff around.

A few years ago we imported as many potatoes from Germany as we exported to Germany. We exported as much butter to the Netherlands as we imported from the Netherlands. Could we not have an economy that is based on just emailing the recipes to each other?

I would challenge what you said: that the best thing people in the developing world can do is export food. Quite often, what they are doing is exporting water. Quite often, that comes from a process of small farmers being kicked off land and sustainable traditional farming being replaced by export-driven agriculture, which often does not serve the people in that country.

For me, it is not simply saying that we need to completely localise everything and become completely self-sufficient. There needs to be a process of making our food system lower-carbon, more resilient, more democratic, more accountable and more diverse. That same process needs to be happening in the developing world the same as it is happening here. Of course, there will be trade—there will always be trade—but there needs to be less unnecessary trade, and there needs to be more fair trade and trade that promotes social justice and equality.

As I said, when I am in France and Belgium, everywhere I see a school and a hospital with a Sodexo contract I see a potential local co-operative and an increase of local biodiversity and local food production. That is a step forward rather than a step backwards.

The Chair: Thank you for that response, Rob. It is very helpful. I thank Rob, Pam and Shanon for their excellent contributions.