

We have to show how it's done,  
say residents with bold plans in  
the first city to declare a climate  
emergency...



Ellie Freeman, Lisa Stone & Mary Rose Clarke discuss how Bristol can address climate change and become carbon neutral by 2030.

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Are you worried about how your life will be affected when your home city sees the arrival of climate change impacts?

Ambitious ideas, along with widespread feelings of anxiety and desperation for change, were shared at a public meeting in Bristol, when residents launched a groundbreaking new BS3 Climate Emergency Group.

They aim to put forward radical ways their city can tackle greenhouse gas emissions and help create the first city in Britain to lay a path to being carbon neutral by 2030.

Their launch follows Bristol City Council becoming the first in Britain to declare a climate emergency, in November. The 4 political parties and the Mayor,

Marvin Rees, all unanimously supported the City Hall's 2030 target, at a meeting amid cheers from campaigners who crammed the public gallery. But the Mayor has also appealed to Bristol to help him find ways to achieve that goal, warning it would be an incredibly challenging target - and not to 'use this as a stick to beat me with.'

In response, the Bedminster residents' group is appealing for more people to join them. At their first meeting, they heard stark disaster predictions for Bristol and further afield, from environmental researcher Nikki Jones, they shared their own fears and discussed radical ideas for solutions. Now they are proposing a list of demands that could change how we live in Bristol.

*“Living in this complete  
madness is very unnerving”*

Their actions follow the latest International Panel on Climate Change report, in which thousands of scientists warned we only have 12 years left to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, if we are to save the world from catastrophic climate warming beyond a critical 1.5C average increase.

Above this temperature rise, scientists have warned we face irreversible world-changing impacts and large numbers of deaths from floods, drought, famine, loss of farmland, poverty, the increased spread of some diseases, extreme heat and forest fires, more devastation from violent storms and the collapse of ecosystems that we depend upon.

Nikki Jones set out a stark picture of how life is likely to look in south Bristol beyond 2030, as the more serious impacts of warming begin to arrive.

She said: "We have a finite and closing window of time to act, otherwise we are eyeballing our own extinction. "The next 5 years are critical. Bristol must peak our carbon use at 2020 and then drop it rapidly. The UK and Bristol need to cut by 10% per year."

Nikki added: "Dangerous climate change is already coming - the question now is can we avoid catastrophic climate change above 1.5C? Above that, the risks are extreme. We waste so much carbon at present, that these changes do not have to send us back to shivering in the Stone Age, but we must cut consumption."

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#### **What impacts might Bristol expect at 1.5C warming?**

- \* Fewer fish to eat: 25 % of fish species rely on corals; 80% of which will be lost.
  - \* Snowmen and sledging in Bristol becoming an extremely rare or lost experience.
  - \* Potentially more crop and garden pests, parasites and diseases.
  - \* Crop losses due to drought, scorching, flooding and land loss.
  - \* Extreme and longer periods of heat, cold, rainfall, drought.
  - \* Floods with damage to land and buildings.
  - \* At least 1metre sea level rise by 2080.
  - \* Food price rises and shortages.
  - \* Higher insurance costs.
  - \* Threats to pollinators.
  - \* Public unrest & anger.
  - \* Higher energy costs.
  - \* Higher travel costs.
  - \* Higher carbon tax.
  - \* Water restrictions.
  - \* Power outages.
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"In Bristol, there is a big risk, inland, of heavier rain combined with more floods, because we are at the bottom of a whole confluence of rivers. Our river catchment area around Bristol is almost all arable and pasture, so we've lost our natural flood defences. There will be extreme weather whatever we do now.

"Hot spells will last longer, water shortages are very likely, much sooner than 2030. This will creep into our major food producing areas."

Mary Rose Clarke from Bedminster said: "It is very easy to become overwhelmed, depressed, anxious and frozen by this. It feels as if we've all been in a trance, and looking away because it is too much to take in, and now we are faced with reality.

"We have to move away from just business as usual, to a climate emergency that needs significant and collective action to prevent extinction. People from my generation have been taught about climate change at a very young age, hearing about the catastrophic effects but not seeing any change, in fact the exact opposite.

*"I worry about what my kids' future will look like"*

"Living in this complete madness is very unnerving and I think it really affects a lot of younger people who are confused, that we are set on this path and nothing is happening to change that."

Psychotherapist, Tarisha Finnegan-Clarke, said: "I have worked in mental health for a long time and noticed growing distress in people over climate change. There is not a fit between how people want the world to be acting, and how they see the world running in the opposite direction."

Ellie Freeman, from Action Greater Bedminster, agreed: "As a mother, I worry about what my kids' future is going to look like."

Greenpeace member Lisa Stone said: "I'd like to see system change. On a practical level, one example of what I'd like to see is funding spent on creating an urban forest in Bristol."

Catherine pipe, of Bedminster Energy Group, who organises regular talks at Bristol's Tobacco Factory, said: "I saw how serious the situation is. I wanted to do something in my local community and be as low carbon as possible, so I started volunteering."

Mary Rose Clarke added: "It can feel like we are pushing against the tide. Especially at Christmas time, when you walk into town and look around at all the consumption!"



Fi Radford, Extinction Rebellion campaigner.

Several people at the meeting said they had become involved in actions, taking to the streets, door-knocking, staging road blocks, talks and more. One 70-year-old Bristolian, Fi Radford, said she'd been lying on London's Lambeth Bridge, during campaign group Extinction Rebellion's peaceful protests that closed 5 bridges across the Thames in central London in November – fully prepared to get arrested.

She added: "The older you are, the more you should put yourself up for that kind of direct action, whereas young people still have to think about their jobs. Now Bristol's Mayor has asked us for help. We've got to give it to him."

Southville Cllr Stephen Clarke said afterwards: "There was a great passion and knowledge in the meeting. I personally found it inspiring and learned a lot. If we

are to reach this challenging carbon target, politicians need to really listen to local groups such as this.”

Green Party Cllr Carla Denyer who led the climate emergency motion, said: “We can’t wait for the UN or national governments to negotiate when we have just 12 years to act – we have to show how it’s done and commit to ambitious action at the level of cities.”

<b>Bristol people’s ideas to reduce carbon by 2030</b>
* A new, funded Citizens Assembly, backed by experts, comprising a randomly selected jury, to make binding climate decisions for Bristol.
* A new city ‘climate czar’ role, to support the Mayor and oversee carbon reduction.
* Persuade or enforce behaviour change among residents.
* Funding to help people switch to energy saving choices.
* Rethinking current support for Bristol Airport expansion.
* Find subsidies for residents wanting greener homes.
* Audit the carbon cost of food brought into Bristol.
* Challenge businesses and institutions to do more.
* Banning non-essential private cars in the city.
* Higher energy efficiency on all development.
* Force council contractors to lower emissions.
* Carbon reduction in every council decision.
* Climate change training for all council staff.
* Revolutionise the city’s public transport.
* Pressure on Bristol businesses to adapt.
* Electrification of all council vehicles.
* More electric car power points.
* Reduce food waste.

The BS3 Climate Emergency Group plans to meet regularly and take their best ideas to the Mayor. Cllr Clarke has asked the Mayor to report back with an action list by May 2019: “We know that 2030 is a big commitment for the city and to meet this target an awareness of carbon emissions will have to factor in every decision the Council takes.”

The new BS3 group includes residents, environmental professionals and members of community groups Rising Up, Extinction Rebellion, Bedminster Energy Group, Action Greater Bedminster, One by One, Bristol Green Party and Bristol Greenpeace.

After the meeting, Labour Cllr Kye Dudd, City Hall’s cabinet member for energy and waste, said: “As a

council we are on track to reduce our emissions by 40 per cent by 2020. Much research has already been undertaken to produce statistical studies of emissions in the regions.

“While we see a need for further research, we are determined to press ahead with delivering action to combat CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and make strides towards our carbon neutral goal.

“This includes developing initiatives such as a City Energy Investment Programme and the Bristol Transport Plan. However, the Council cannot make a city carbon neutral acting alone - we need the Government to step up with support and businesses to be responsible to achieve any targets we make.”

- Details of the next meeting of BS3 Climate Emergency Group will be announced soon.

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