



Climate Co-Lab

Meeting Notes

Public Engagement: A Challenge of Planetary Scale

Chaired by Dr Simon Gage OBE,
CEO of Edinburgh Science

Wednesday 27 April 2022, 2—4.30pm. Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh



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Agenda

Welcome from Dr Simon Gage OBE, CEO of Edinburgh Science

Provocation followed by Q&A Discussion – Dominic Fry, Chair of Royal Botanic Gardens
Edinburgh

Provocation followed by Q&A Discussion – Dr Alex Hilliam, Programme Manager, Climate
Partnerships, Edinburgh Climate Change Institute

Climate Co-Lab discussion led by Dr Simon Gage OBE

Welcome from Dr Simon Gage OBE, CEO of Edinburgh Science

It has been almost three years to the day since Cristiana Figueres started the Climate Opportunity Ideas Factory after receiving the Edinburgh Medal at the 2019 Science Festival – what better way to commemorate the occasion than by holding a round table on public engagement!

What we have realised through engaging the public with science is that it's relatively easy to make people understand things but far harder to change their behaviour – which is what we need to do to get to net zero.

Provocation from Dominic Fry, Chair of Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh – meaningful action for people and planet

Let's set the scene with a provocation! I will put a strong focus on action, as the time for talking has long passed.

How can you challenge your organisation from the inside? My sense is that organisations are listening to their employees – they want to keep you. Pressure from within will be fruitful – resulting in change. In order to confront existential threats, it will take more than personal efforts.

Five areas you might find meaningful or interesting to talk about:

- Environmental and ethical investment. Question how an organisation's capital is invested. Current markets incentivise a short-term view. Pensions, money, capital
- Make alliances with other businesses. RBGE and Kew Gardens have been working constructively together since the pandemic; drug companies have been collaborating to produce vaccines
- Get an environmental mantra going and repeat it so that your organisation stands for it. Think about how to get public buy-in and bring the public along the change curve. As wealthy nations and corporates we should bear the burden of this. Fund capacity building for projects internationally and locally that people can champion
- Sign up to environmentally aware procurement. Short-termness is the death of us
- Don't greenwash! Base your communications on facts and scientific data

I will close with 3 examples of work Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh (RBGE) are doing to raise awareness of climate issues:

- Red labels are placed on plants which are endangered or threatened with extinction.
- Cultivating nature-based solutions for climate change – for example working with protected areas in the Middle East
- Restoring Alpine blue sow thistle in the Scottish Highlands

Comments, questions and pledges for action?

SG: When you say 'support environmentally sound policies' are these political or organisational?

DF: Organisational. 15 years ago M&S was a good example of an enterprise taking the environment so seriously. We were the first retail company to ban plastic bags. Other retailers thought we were mad, if customers couldn't carry shopping why would they shop with us? It played out rather differently than they expected.

JO: There is an Oxfam index of respect for human rights in the supermarket sector. One was at 9% and it wasn't even breaking the law. So maybe we do need to look at legal and public frameworks and how they relate.

DF: Consumer pressure can phase this out and change the way that organisations act.

LMcG: We can't put all the onus on the individual customer. It's not easy to make a decision without clear labelling and information. It's easier to legislate for change within companies than engage every individual and get them to change purchasing decisions.

Anon: In reality – it's a combination of both.

The role of organisations in providing green choices, versus the roles of individuals in actively making these choices

Anon: In the property sector, Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) do provide a huge amount of information – but we don't see people paying much attention. So, we have the legislation here in the sales market but not the customer drive. On the tenant side we have the opposite – tenants want an energy efficient home but there's no framework for one. If I had the power to change it would be helpful to legislate the rental market and increase knowledge toward sustainability in the sales market.

KA: Zero Waste Scotland are funded by Scot Gov to help Scotland move toward a greener economy. Looking at the system holistically is quite difficult. It is hard to pinpoint where we are on the change curve in a particular sector. That would help us incentivise behaviour change. When the consumer option hasn't quite got there, we need whole system change. Consumption is missing completely from the agenda of the climate crisis. Scotland is one of five countries in the world who looks at how much we consume as a nation. 18.4 tonnes of "stuff" a year. Academics say it needs to be closer to 7. So even as the experts we aren't doing well. In boardrooms, how much do they know about this and how do we help them understand it? No point having an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) agenda if it misses the mark! Scotland has an opportunity to be first in the world to do this.

SG: How do you decouple growth from the desire to sell more? Difficult to make these choices – one needs a PhD to work out what the lowest carbon shopping basket is! Is public engagement about giving people a PhD's worth of knowledge about low carbon lifestyles or giving people key knowledge and making the easy decisions the most carbon-friendly ones?

AO: We at Pawprint would like to add more info to the app about products in supermarkets. Currently we encourage people to look at in-season fruit and vegetables. I talked to a number of clients the other day including Quorn who said that they have started putting carbon emissions against their products. They said they had not seen an impact.

KL: There's almost like a threshold where there is something that you will do and beyond that you will outsource it, you may take the action e.g., switching from plastic water bottles to reusable ones, you don't see so many plastic ones anymore. Quorn are seen as a low carbon solution anyway so has that decision already been made/outourced by choosing Quorn? People let others take control of some choices.

Attention must be paid to what is in someone's control. To scale this up organisations must put the more sustainable choices under people's control. Then the public and businesses can work together better to reach net zero.

LMcG: Carbon labelling requires a point of reference so people know what the figures mean. There needs to be an ISM (individual, social, material) approach to behaviour change. Energy Saving Trust (EST) are interested in how to change behaviour around how to reduce energy usage. Pricing is a big issue for people now. I am interested in how we engage as wide a range of people as possible – not just the keen and those struggling with bills. How do we link up so that EST can help the people who would engage with RBGE about biodiversity, on how energy is impacting biodiversity loss. How do we link up and engage with everyone across all platforms? Complex topic.

KA: Getting citizens to realise the impact of certain actions is important. A unit of food waste produces more carbon dioxide than people think compared to plastic bottles for example! This stimulated our most successful campaign last year. We need to tap into something that is already in peoples' heads. In this case it was plastic bottles as a reference point. Is there something collectively in the public consciousness that we can all collectively tap into? Partnership working will help.

HC: COP26 went really well for us at Dynamic Earth. For us, the success comes from getting the research community to meet the public. We have a great workshop for schools about palm oil – you can get people fired up about one specific thing and get through to them that way. However, it is difficult for them to action what they have learned if there are so few palm oil free options – the onus cannot just be on the consumer to change their habits, they have to actually be able to.

CW: We should not have to make people choose between the polluting or the non.

Events as vehicles for engaging attendees with sustainability

TMcL: Events have scope to create the environment where that exists. You don't get the option if they have decided to only provide sustainable things. You can meet an audience who may not make sustainable choices in a supermarket. Audience awareness is generally that they want to do the right thing but don't know how. Events are a great platform to meet audiences!

LCR: At Creative Carbon Scotland, the way we do public engagement provides skills. In our Climate Beacons public engagement project before COP26 we found it most effective when people were able to provide influence as well as be informed. We looked at climate impacts in the Outer Hebrides and helped people make plans with cultural organisations, mapping the impacts and incorporating learnings into a plan for these local places which included engaging with policymakers.

SG: Why are we engaging the public in the first place? Is it to influence their behaviour or elicit change from the bottom up – pushing policy?

RD: Can I talk about Cornish Pasties? At Eden Project they challenged pastry providers to make palm oil free pastry. Hard but managed it. It became THE palm oil free pastry, and Eden used to tell the story. You have an influence on your supply chain and you have an influence on those you then supply to. Working in partnership and can share results with the public!

Provocation from Dr Alex Hilliam, Programme Manager, Climate Partnerships, Edinburgh Climate Change Institute

This discussion is so exciting! Frustration? Confusion? How do we get a handle on all this? The original brief was to say something about the science behind behaviours. My *raison d'être* was to translate insights from researchers and put them

into practice so that people like you, us, could take action. So, I am going to try and integrate what we have talked about. How do we bring the public along a change curve? To do so we need to understand the factors that drive change, the science behind it. Behavioural change, economics, sociology, psychology – they tell us lots of different things. What do we need to grab hold of? A few highlights from Lewis and Hermione's comments is that we can give people loads of info but they can't change what they are doing because they don't have the knowledge, ability or environment due to factors beyond them.

What are the norms of behaviour, roles people adopt? We behave differently as managing directors than we do as parents, as holidaymakers. We're not always rational, logical, we discount future benefits and we don't always do what's best for us. Pensions? Why would we do that? Funding to use insulation to save money – people are not rational so they didn't do it. Supermarkets are great at getting people to do what they want. They put on Spanish music we buy Spanish wine. They put beer and chips last. They put ripe fruit first so that we pick it up – but a lot becomes food waste. This has been encapsulated by Scot Gov since 2011 in the ISM model – Individual, social, material. To understand what drives people, we need to look at INDIVIDUAL perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, age, educational level so we can influence these. But the SOCIAL world influences these and sometimes makes it hard to change. To use an example: Individually, I am excited to buy a house. I can check out the EPC, but if I am surrounded by people saying this is a good house because it's near a school or near the botanic gardens etc., it's really hard to get excited by a home with a better EPC. The social world is pushing information at you and changing the meaning of the importance of things. The social world is surrounded by MATERIAL constraints like time, infrastructure, items, regulations. We are bound by the material box.

This tells us that change is complex and lots of factors matter. To use the plastic bag example lots of factors intervened to make that a success e.g., a rise in the sale of tote bags before bringing fees/bans in. To change behaviours you need to work with the social and material systems. There are lots and lots of small things feeding in to it before the behaviour change actually comes, multiple levers.

We also need to understand how we get through to the public in this context. We need to champion successes like that. Together, we can engage all elements of the system. Between us we have multiple levers. We can identify the individual, social and material challenges and come together as institutions to promote the change.

- Let's celebrate the success – let's share ideas about the next steps. On your tables talk about some of your successes

What was individual, social, material?

- What's missing?
- What have you done well?
- What are the next steps?
- Who would you like to work with?

Feedback from individual table discussions

- Need to focus on normalising action and promoting agency. When you see a business doing something exciting, promote that; it encourages others to make these choices.
- Greenwashing is a real issue because it masks things that are happening. SSE are moving brown energy to green which is applaudable. However, organisations are often not trusted. Who can we work with in the room to spread these messages in a trusted way?
- Use what people already know. Connect decarbonisation to their current lives and behaviours as plausibly possible. An example about National Museums Scotland's internal staff engagement – they have used a museum analogy of a 'light budget' which applies to objects in collections. They look at how to best use the object. Carbon emissions are also presented as a finite resource that we use. We can use carbon without thinking or use it more purposefully; holding bits of carbon back to use in particular ways.

- What's meaningful to some people is not meaningful to others so we have to tap in and engage people in various, POSITIVE, ways. Not doom and gloom!
- The predicament of needing to act now but behaviour change takes time.

Ideas Factory: discussion led by Dr Simon Gage

- Leveraging people-power and buy-in: how can we help people see that their actions matter? How can we alleviate climate despondency? How do we encourage people to band together to build a positive future? How do we help bring the public along the change curve?
- Our roles: What influence do we hold as communicators, campaigners, businesses, artists, individuals and governments?

SG: What can come from this meeting that can help people do what they want to do fast when it is massively complex? Can we press on with the bits that we are good at, and it will all come right? Lewis at CCS made a successful intervention allowing the public to influence policy via the Climate Beacons project. What is the role of the public, as staff of organisations, to influence within an organisation? Between us – we have millions of people at our fingertips. Ian Gulland (of ZWS) was saying it can't come from top down but it must come from bottom up. How do we ferment greater levels of agitation? Should we be urging people to be more militant? Rules for Revolutionaries book

LmcG: Home Energy Scotland provides free advice to households and businesses across Scotland. We don't have a massive marketing budget so it's hard to get the message out that we exist. Such a great service people always say "did not know we existed." Help me get the message out of free help!

JO: If an organisation has plans for the public, they should extend that support to staff to enable them as well. A lot of sense in supporting staff to make the same journey as part of your net zero plan.

JB: Sharing strategies, sharing challenges between businesses is important. We need to facilitate a *platform for learning from each other*

AH: The Climate Compact is a group of businesses getting together to work toward net zero. If you want to get into that space, it's a great opportunity and it's a good space for members to use it as they wish.

MM: Ostrero's Making Circles workshops give knowledge of why we need to change. All the schools we are working with will create a practical guide for other schools to help them cut down on waste with practical steps.

ES: As Cirrus Logic's Head of Sustainability this is much harder than the semiconductor physics that our organisation does! I'd be willing to work with whoever the right person is as we go along this journey to create a resource group to share ESG goals and information, and put together some sort of guidebook.

SG: It comes back to doing what you can. There's a lot of info out there, a lot of confusion. Needs to be a simplification and systemisation of this process to make it easier.

GR: Edinburgh Climate Compact is good but we need to all come together to look at particular solutions, not just how we measure things. One of the things when you talk about info sharing is that it is SO BIG. SO many solutions going on. The climate compact gives us a focus and we have found it really useful and supportive to have that local focus.

BF: The heart of Keep Scotland Beautiful's programmes is continuous improvement. This isn't an all-or-nothing game. Fundamentally bringing people in and making it enjoyable is what we need to do to stimulate behaviour change. We see results when climate-beneficial projects also contribute to the happiness and wellbeing of people.

AO: Encouraging companies to be open and honest works – One Chief Financial Officer we worked with posted their carbon footprint on LinkedIn and it was shocking as they fly all over to meetings. Tricky because we are used to being critical, e.g., as sustainability groups. Through Pawprint, CEOs are being very open and honest about celebrating the small changes we are making. We are only seeing 20-30% of people in our clients' organisations signing up to the app but it influences company culture. It's about not judging people in this space – looking at their lifestyle and finding the small things knowing that change does happen over time.

SG: Pawprint is an app which addresses the entire content of this meeting. Pawprint makes the stuff we have discussed in this meeting sociable and conversational; people get competitive and that helps!

TS: Elephant in room – needs to be done more on policy and public sentiment about how much this is all going to cost. How do we better articulate that this doesn't have to break the bank at an individual level?

HS: We have talked before as Scotland as a living lab and a great place for trialing things – how do we communicate about awesome projects?

RD: Tara's point and Elephants in room – audits are important, but education and awareness is really important. RBGE etc., give you the message that we are nature. This sits at the heart of the climate crisis. We have that impetus to then think about taking the green mortgage, etc. If we can open up lifelong learning about sustainability values you make these 'green' decisions a lot more likely over the course of a person's lifetime.

SG: lots of enthusiasm amongst the cultural sector. Progress is perhaps needed on embedding sustainability in the curriculum for schools.

Scary versus optimistic

DF: There is an element that all of us in this room are preaching to the converted. We don't want to become complacent and remember that these are existential threats. Scary messaging perhaps works? We've just had lockdowns where people stayed in their houses because, basically, they were scared of dying.

AH: There is mixed evidence on the role of 'scary,' but I think it's important. We need to provide the right message for the right people in the right space. If we need to give a shock now and again it's probably a good thing in very small quantities. Any more and it demotivates people.

TS: Just picking up on Dominic's point – IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) content has been skipped over due to other global crises so not had the impact that it could have. But it is frightening what is already here right now! Mud slides, floods on railways in Scotland. We need to make sure that the link is made between these happenings and the climate crisis.

EM: Scale and urgency, we only have a short period of time. We don't want to use scare tactics but we need to make the public aware. Enabling change is wonderful but I would like to see that we are acting with urgency and what that incremental change looks like. My question to Scottish Government is – what can we do to show ways that the public can get involved and make personal contributions? This could create a positive buzz about action.

SG: Tricky that there is no deadline. We need a clock showing the number of natural disasters and the rate at which it goes up; we could also illustrate the impact on the economy.

AO: How do we engage the unengaged? People want to know the benefits to themselves. We have to use our campaigns to talk about other benefits to that individual e.g., cost of living crisis. We have to take it away from ourselves and what we believe and think of what the benefits other people need are and work out how climate action could benefit them.

LMcG: I went to training from climate outreach. I recommend their seminars. They are very strongly advocating that the way to introduce the disasters that we are facing is not to lead with them as this will switch them off the subject. Pick what matters to the particular person e.g., a farmer in Australia and say “if you do this [e.g., conserve water], it will enable this (drought) **not to happen.**” So, you do tell the bad news, but lead with the behaviour that can prevent it. You surface the difficult stuff, but do so in a way that people can process.

KA: Behaviour change ties into social norms. One selling point from Scotland is the culture sector. Recently there has been loads more about climate in public entertainment sectors. How can we continue to bring this in?

LCR: Creative Carbon Scotland understand how hard it is to get action from people where it doesn't sit with their needs and values. Cultural work like films, tv and theatre, can play a role in creating necessary pre-conditions for change – framing, showing how climate is connected to local issues e.g., land use.

AH: We have to make this a social norm and arts and culture help.

Conclusions and ideas

SG: It's complex. It's unpredictable and multifaceted. There are so many audiences that between us we can engage – so we must keep doing what we are doing, but jump at any opportunity to work together to tie in solutions across the whole system. We are all at different stages but we know what we are trying to achieve.

Ideas

- A platform for sharing information, ideas and best practice. For public, small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) and us – the sustainability professionals.
- Sharing case studies of good practice
- Better clarification of our roles across the system

Useful resources

Gemma Mortensen thesis – 6th sense of captaincy

Rules for revolutionaries: <http://www.rulesforrevolutionaries.org/>

LinkedIn Group

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12657496/>

Delegate List

Delegate List

First Name	Surname	Job Title	Organisation
Kelly	Allan	Head of Communications	Zero Waste Scotland
Juliette	Briey	Carbon & Sustainability Consultant	Net Zero Nation
Hermione	Cockburn	Science Director	Dynamic Earth
Lewis	Coenen-Rowe	Culture/SHIFT Producer	Creative Carbon Scotland
Alex	Davey	Science, Policy and Impact Officer	Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh
Ria	Dunkley	Senior Lecturer Geography, Environment, Sustainability	University of Glasgow
Lorna	Ewan	Head of Public Engagement	Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh
Barry	Fisher	Chief Executive	Keep Scotland Beautiful
Lee	Fitzpatrick	Managing Director	Outlaw Creative
David	Fraser	Lead Account Manager	SSE Energy Solutions
Megan	Frost	Client Relationship Manager	Ecometrica
Dominic	Fry	Chair of the Board	Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh
Simon	Gage	CEO	Edinburgh Science
David	Gordon	Senior Business Engagement Manager	Pawprint
Mayan	Grace	Head of Projects	Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce
Ruth	Gill	Director of Public Programmes	National Museums Scotland
Hannah	Grist	Lecturer	Scotland's Rural College
Alex	Hilliam	Programme Manager	Edinburgh Climate Change Institute (ECCI)
Saskia	Kearns	National Public Energy Agency Development & HiB Public Engagement Strategy	
Emma	Lacroix	Director of Development	Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh
Kirsty	Lieberthal	Customer Experience Manager	M & G
Caitlin	MacInnes	Climate Change Learning Coordinator	Glasgow Science Centre
Torquil	Macleod	Industry Engagement & Development Manager	Visit Scotland
Laura	McGadie	Group Head of Energy	Energy Saving Trust
Mary	Michel	Director	Ostrero
Emma	Morton	Architect - Research and Development - City Development Plan	Glasgow City Council
Janie	Neuman	Head of Sustainable Tourism	Visit Scotland
James	Oliver	Group Marketing Director	Hampden Group
Cecelia	Oram	Behaviour Change manager	Sustrans
Jason	Ormiston	Head of External Affairs	Nature Scot
Anna	Orr	Business Engagement Executive	Pawprint
Debbie	Paynter	Public Engagement & Behaviour Change	Scottish Government
Gordon	Robertson	Director of Communications and Sustainability	Edinburgh Airport
Hannah	Schlesinger	Director of Marketing and Development	Edinburgh Science
Tara	Schmidt	Sustainability and ESG Finance Director	Lloyds Banking Group
Eddie	Sinnott	Business Unit manager	Cirrus Logic
Michela	Tallarico	Sustainability Analyst	Ecometrica
Georgina	Weston	Chartered Rural Surveyor	Galbraith
Clare	Wood	Global Head of Product	Stewart Investors

Thanks

With thanks to our funders

We are indebted to the organisations shown below. Their support enables us to connect organisations who would not normally sit around the same table, seed innovative ideas and catalyse a greener future for our city and planet.

To find out how your logo could appear here, please contact:

hannah.schlesinger@scifest.co.uk

PROGRAMME SUPPORTERS



Actual Investors

FUNDING PARTNERS



Appendix

(i) About Edinburgh Science

Edinburgh Science Foundation is an educational charity, founded in 1989, which operates Edinburgh Science's Education and Festival programmes. We are best known for organising Edinburgh's annual Science Festival – the world's first public celebration of science and technology and still one of Europe's largest – our science education outreach programmes, Generation Science and Careers Hive and our community engagement work.

Our mission is to inspire, encourage and challenge people of all ages and backgrounds to explore and understand the world around them. As leaders in our field of Science Communication, we work year-round to create and deliver dynamic hands-on workshops and exhibitions and inspirational shows, discussions, debates and performances that continually push the boundaries of public engagement with science. Communication and engagement are at the core of all our work and we strive to ensure that this is embedded in all aspects of our organisation.

Edinburgh Science also operates a large-scale commercial international programme of work under our Worldwide arm with any profit directed into our Foundation to enable charitable work. Edinburgh Science regularly presents events overseas and has been the Major Programming Partner of the annual Abu Dhabi Science Festival since 2011, helping to curate, produce and deliver the event. For international partners, the team at Edinburgh Science provide engaging content, curatorial advice on programming and business planning support, along with expert staff and training for local science communicators.

Edinburgh Science's UK and international projects reach a combined audience of over half a million people each year, in a normal year.

Climate Co-Lab Meetings

Edinburgh Science coordinates and runs Climate Co-Labs (formally known as Climate Opportunity Ideas Factory Meetings) – a series of round table meetings for senior Scottish leaders to discuss ideas for action to enable Scottish enterprises to respond to the climate emergency. It was initiated in April 2019 when Edinburgh Science Festival awarded the Edinburgh Medal to Christiana Figueres, the Costa Rican Diplomat who was instrumental in bringing about the Paris Climate Agreement. We organised a round table on that day, with leaders of business, public sector, third sector and higher education present. They were challenged by Christiana to collaborate, to act, to not wait for anyone to give them permission, and to use the Climate Opportunity that presented itself for positive change.

Christiana was coming back to Edinburgh in two months and asked to meet again for an update on what this group had decided to do. Two months later, Baillie Gifford hosted a larger group of senior leaders who presented a number of ideas for discussion in this forum, with Christina Figueres and Roseanna Cunningham, the then Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform. Many of the ideas have been picked up by attending businesses and organisations to make an impact, and the attendees have told us that this group is of immense value to them, due to the diverse invite list and the facilitated discussions.

The purpose of the meetings is to generate new ideas that are then acted upon by those present to achieve steps towards reduced carbon emissions and greater environmental sustainability.

Edinburgh Science is in an exceptional position to bring together cross-sectoral leaders to gather views to identify new ways to work collaboratively to unlock ideas and create opportunities. Climate Co-Labs provide a unique safe space for collaboration, resulting in major ideas, for example a national carbon reserve for offsetting which we know excited many organisations. With connections across industries and many sectors, and no agenda other than to share the science and to see a solution to the climate emergency, Edinburgh Science strongly believes that the time is right to harness the collective power of organisations and minds and to put Scotland at the forefront of this Climate Opportunity.