

Continuing the Journey: Equipping members of Scotland's Climate Assembly to stand up for their Recommendations

March 2022



Image: A screenshot of the committed group of assembly members at our Next Steps event



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The Delivery Partners



Democratic Society is one of Europe's leading democracy organisations, having worked in 24 countries across the continent to deliver practical projects to bring citizens into the decisions that affect their lives. Demsoc works directly with communities, with local and Scottish Government, public services and civil society to involve people in decision making. www.demsoc.org



Involve is the UK's leading public participation charity. Involve work towards creating a more vibrant democracy, with people at the heart of decision-making. We have a mission to develop, support and campaign for new ways of involving people in the decisions that affect their lives. Since our foundation in 2003, we have worked with governments, parliaments, civil society organisations, academics and the public across the UK and internationally to put people at the heart of decision-making. We have offices in Belfast, Edinburgh and London. www.involve.org.uk

Involve and Democratic Society, were previously contracted to deliver design and facilitation services for Scotland's Climate Assembly. Involve also provided direct support to members throughout the process.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for all the Assembly Members who engaged with this ongoing support. Your ideas and energy have been inspiring.

Summary

Scotland's Climate Assembly is a group of 100 citizens from all walks of life who were tasked with agreeing recommendations for tackling the climate emergency in a fair and effective way. The Assembly initially gathered between November 2020 and March 2021. Once they had completed their recommendations, Assembly Members didn't want this to be the end of their journey. The Secretariat who helped organise the Assembly facilitated a grant from the Scottish Government to Involve and Democratic Society to provide ongoing support to Assembly Members to help them do this.

The purpose of this project was to develop a network of Assembly Members that could continue to stay actively involved: Helping this group identify their aims and giving them support to start taking the next steps on their journey.

This report is written by Democratic Society and Involve and describes how we worked with Assembly Members and what we learnt along the way.

How we worked with Assembly Members

From September 2021 to March 2022, we held a series of events for Assembly Members. We worked with a small but committed group of members. Across these activities we learnt about their aims, what success would look like for them, and what support they needed to begin the next stage of their journey.

The group's aims

Through surveys, emails and conversations, we learnt more about what this group of Assembly Members wanted to achieve by continuing to work together. There were two main themes to what members wanted to achieve, with different aspects mentioned within these:

Holding the Scottish Government accountable for implementing the Climate Assembly's recommendations:

- Lobbying politicians
- Building up evidence to make a case
- Improving public awareness of the Climate Assembly to hold the Scottish Government to account
- Working with other groups

Achieving change themselves:

- Public education about reducing your climate impact
- Taking local action: community initiatives; making change in the workplace.
- Lobbying local politicians
- Understanding how green companies really are (seeing through greenwashing to make better choices)
- Acting as a support network to help each other with these actions, including connecting with other members nearby to work together
- Working with other groups

The group's vision of success

We asked the group to reflect on what they'd like to be doing together one year from now. These quotes are taken from responses to a final questionnaire:

In your own words tell us what you hope the group will look like one year on. What kind of things will you be doing together?

"The group will be regularly invited to climate committees in Scottish Parliament, invited to parliamentary debates, we shall be connected with other climate assemblies globally to learn from their action, build a citizens climate assembly summit"

"We will be at the centre of a network that connects us to members of parliament, independent climate experts and the public/media. We will be well informed on developments regarding the issues our recommendations address and will scrutinise and respond to the government's measures in response to these publicly."

"Possibly a committee with an overall coordinator and focus groups monitoring the government response to specific recommendations."

"I would like to see the group coming together as campaign awareness group for lifestyle change"

"Confident, informed, strong and able to hold the Scottish Government accountable and responsible to timescales and for inactions"

The support provided

We used a survey and a Kick-Off workshop to understand Assembly Members' aims, and what support would help them achieve this vision. From there we developed a support package, including running 3 events, on Media Training, Fact-checking, and Advocacy Training.

We also ran a Next Steps event to help the group think about how to continue working together. As part of this we identified a group of volunteers who would help with bringing the group back together in the future. We also talked about what support they might be for the group in the future, including linking up with existing structures, networks and groups.

How the journey is continuing

The Assembly Members we worked with wanted to continue to hold the government to account. They wanted to stay visible and continue to push for action on the climate emergency.

Through conversations with Assembly Members, the delivery team, and the Secretariat a promising option emerged for supporting this. This was to work with the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee¹ who currently perform this accountability role for the climate emergency in the Scottish Parliament. A group of assembly members met with the Committee shortly after our Next Steps event, on the 1st March, and talked about being involved in on-going accountability². The Committee has been supportive of this. We are also working with the Secretariat to ensure ongoing communication with the government, and we will also be proposing that the Assembly Members consider engaging with the Open Government Partnership climate change sub-group.

The delivery team subsequently met with the group of Assembly Member volunteers on 7th March to make sure they are set up for organising future meetings. It was decided that we would attend their next meeting to discuss this opportunity to link further with the Net Zero Committee to continue holding the government to account, as well as providing any more information we'd be able to find about ways they could be supported further in the future.

As we reach the end of this project, we will be leaving Assembly Members able to connect with each other, with a vision of what they want to achieve, and some potential avenues for connecting with existing accountability structures and for exploring potential sources of further support.

¹ For more about the committee see:: <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/committees/current-and-previous-committees/session-6-net-zero-energy-and-transport-committee>

² See: <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/what-was-said-in-parliament/NZET-01-03-2022?meeting=13615&iob=123595>

1. Introduction

1.1 What were the aims of this project?

Scotland's Climate Assembly is a group of 100 citizens from all walks of life who were tasked with agreeing recommendations for tackling the climate emergency in a fair and effective way over the course of seven weekends worth of meetings.

In a survey to Assembly Members at the end of the seven weekends, 99% expressed an interest in continuing involvement in some shape or form. The Scottish Government chose to support this aim and funded a proposal from Involve and Democratic Society to support Assembly Members beyond March 2021.

The aims laid out in this proposal were:

"The aim is to develop a thriving network of members that have experienced a deliberative democratic process, in this case through their participation in Scotland's Climate Assembly, to enable their work as ambassadors for the process and their recommendations, and to increase wider awareness and impact of the process.

This network will hold the story of Scotland's Climate Assembly and the space for members to provide mutual support for individual agency and active citizenship.

Specifically, this project will:

1. Support members to self-identify their ambitions and next steps, including the creation of a member network.
2. Provide guidance and direct support to create the structure for a member network.
3. Create communications and 'keep in touch' channels for members to engage directly with each other - shifting the balance from going through a support team to having ownership and control.
4. Increase members' understanding of how decisions are made in Scotland, including how Scottish Parliament works and about initiatives at the local level, enabling them to follow the journey of their recommendations and to connect to other initiatives.

5. Build connections to civil society and members in other deliberative processes, as guided by the members, including around COP26.
6. Develop skills for communication, networking and advocacy”

With the Secretariat disbanding at the end of March 2022, an important goal was to leave Assembly Members able to connect with each other beyond that date.

1.2 Scotland’s Climate Assembly

Scotland’s Climate Assembly was set up after an amendment to establish a citizens’ assembly on climate change received unanimous cross-party support in the Scottish Parliament. It was tasked with coming up with recommendations in answer to the question: ‘How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?’ You can find out more about its work, and how it was organised at: <https://www.climateassembly.scot/>

Due to the Covid19 pandemic, Scotland’s Climate Assembly was the first national assembly in Scotland to meet wholly online. Members were supported to get online - with tech loans, provision of mobile broadband devices, and ‘warm-up calls’ to become familiar with Zoom and its settings. Members also had access to dedicated support throughout the process to help troubleshoot tech problems.

The Assembly initially met for seven weekends from November 2020 to March 2021, creating a set of 81 recommendations. You can find read their full recommendations online: <https://www.climateassembly.scot/full-report>

Their recommendations were presented to the Scottish Parliament in June 2021, with the Scottish Government required to respond within 6 months. Assembly Members then reconvened to assess the government response in February 2022.

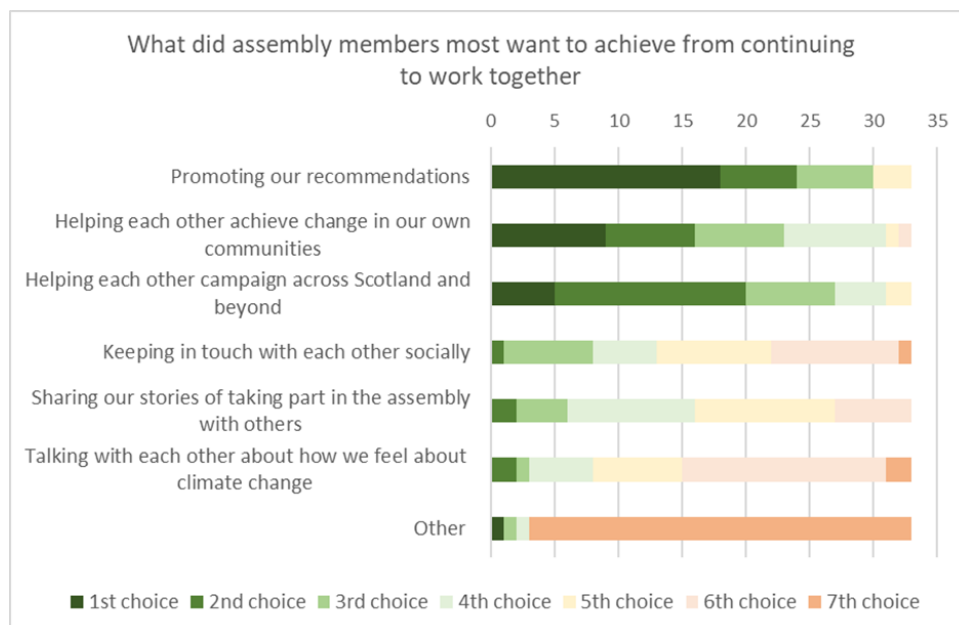
Prior to reconvening, the legacy work described in this report began (September 2021). Additionally, in the interim members were working with the Secretariat to attend Ministerial meetings and discussing events they could contribute to at COP 26. Members were supported by the Secretariat to build their confidence and develop their questions and comments for the Ministerial meetings. This acknowledged that Ministerial meetings are a unique opportunity and one that as seconded out civil servants, the Secretariat were best placed to support.

2. How we worked with Assembly Members

2.1 Preliminary Questionnaire: Starting the conversation about aims and support needs

Our first step was to identify what members wanted to achieve from continuing to stay involved and connected with each other. To hear from a large number of members we began with an online questionnaire sent out to all members. 35 of 101 members responded.

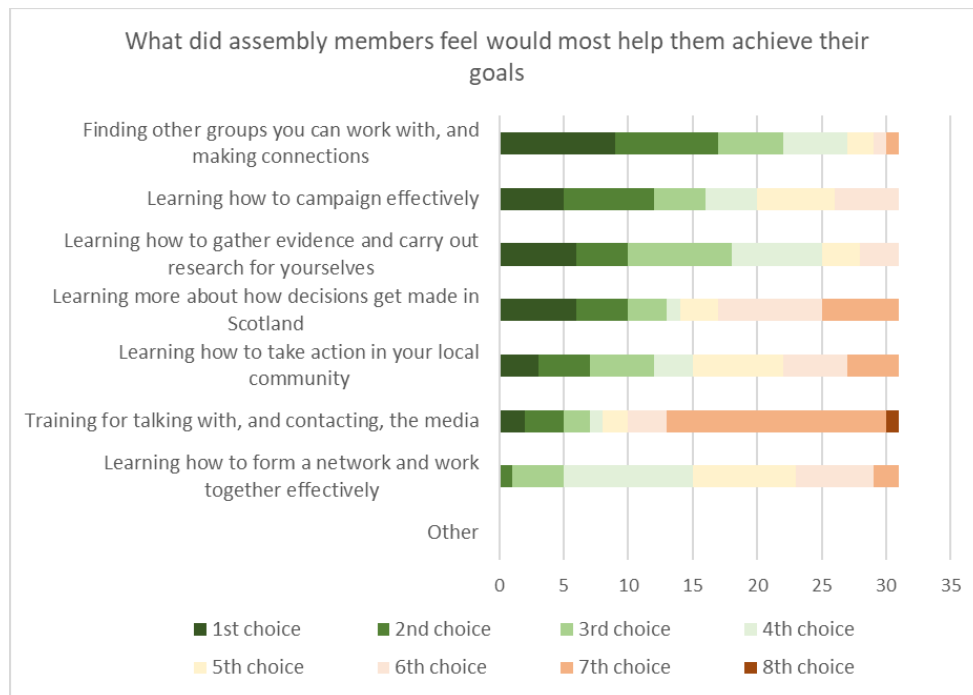
Aims: We asked members to rank a set of statements in order to tell us what they'd most want to achieve from working together. 3 options stood out: Promoting our recommendations; helping each other achieve change in our own communities; and helping each other campaign across Scotland and beyond.



Results from the survey question: 'What do you most want to achieve from continuing to work together as a group of Climate Assembly members? Please put these in order from most, to least, important.'

Statements have been reordered to help illustrate which had most support. 3 people selected and expanded on the 'Other' option, of which 1 said they didn't want to be further involved, 1 said 'I just feel it's important to see where it all goes', and another suggested hearing more expert evidence.

Support needs: We used a similar set of statements to ask what support would help members achieve the aims they identified. Results are shown below.



Results from the survey question: 'We can give some support to help you achieve your goals. What would help you achieve the goals you just shared? Please put these suggestions in order from most, to least, important.'

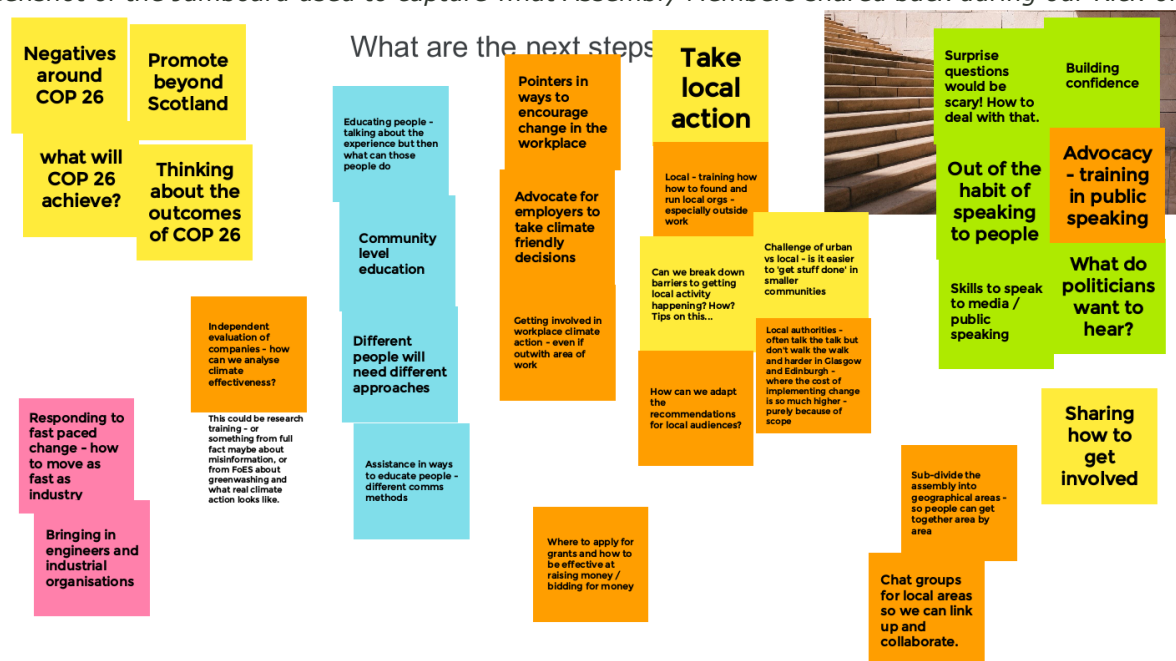
Responses have been roughly ordered to help show the most popular responses. Only one person made use of the 'Other' option but did not elaborate on what they'd like to add.

2.2. Kick-off event: Understanding aims and support needs

These results were used as a discussion prompt at a kick-off event with Assembly Members held online on a Monday evening (6th September 2021). Approximately 10-15 members took part.

This event was the first time members had come back together in a long-time so we started off by giving members space in small groups to catch up and talk about what had changed in their own lives since taking part. We then asked them to reflect on the survey results and think about how this compared to their own views about aims for future involvement and support needed to make this happen. Groups were able to use jamboards to make notes as they went, and fed back into a whole group discussion at the end where we captured our own notes on a jamboard.

A screenshot of the Jamboard used to capture what Assembly Members shared back during our Kick-off event



The main points we heard were:

- Advocating for recommendations to politicians, including knowing who is needed to make different recommendations happen
- Being able to campaign publicly, including speaking to the media
- Being able to find evidence to support your case and to help cut through greenwashing

- Educating the public about actions to reduce climate impact
- Being able to take action in local communities and in the workplace
- Linking up with other groups and networks

2.3 Drafting support activities

After the event we wrote up a summary of the main support needs we heard. We used these to draw up some suggested support activities. This write-up, and our initial suggestions are shared in full below.

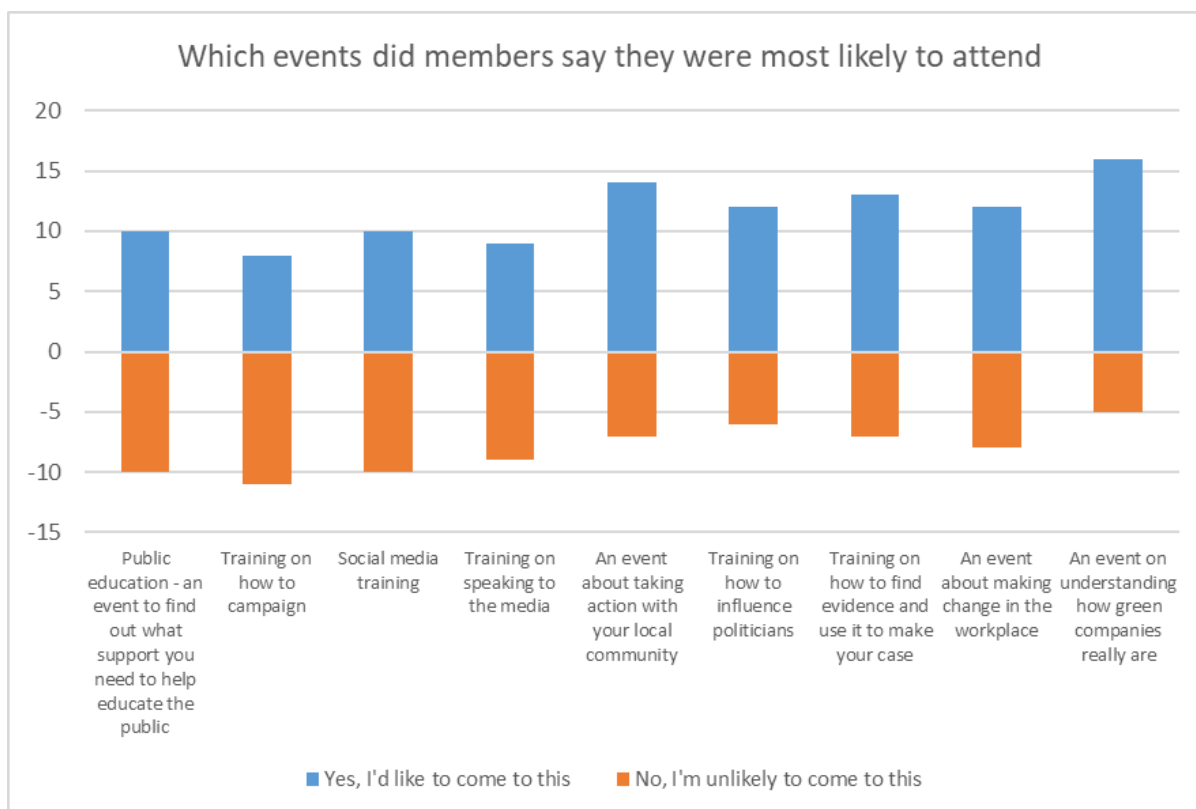
What we heard	What we suggest
<p>Talking through your needs</p>	
<p>Educating the public about how they can reduce their climate impact</p> <p>This was the strongest theme but there were lots of ideas and it's not yet clear what you think is most needed to help you do this.</p>	<p>Public education - an event to find out more about what help you are interested in, to help you do this. We are also interested in hearing your feedback before the event too.</p>
<p>Training</p>	
<p>Campaigning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using social media ▪ How to campaign ▪ Building confidence in public speaking ▪ Building confidence in talking to the media 	<p>Campaigning training - this is offered, for example, by the Sheila McKechnie foundation.</p> <p>Media training - getting in touch with, and speaking to, the media.</p> <p>Social media training - including staying safe on social media.</p>
<p>Taking action with your local community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Founding and funding of local groups ▪ Understanding what communities can do to take action 	<p>How to take action with your local community - training event. Possible speakers: Scottish Climate Change Action Network.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledging the difference between rural and urban areas as part of this 	
<p>Advocacy training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to put your case to politicians and get results. Making change at different levels, particular Local Authority level as well as Scottish Government and other levels. 	<p>Advocacy training - how to put your case to politicians and get results. Including information about different levels of government. Organised by our delivery team.</p>
<p>Building up evidence behind recommendations to make a case</p>	<p>Research training - training in how to find the latest evidence to support your argument. For example, by Full Fact, or possibly with the assembly research team.</p>
<p>Talks and Events</p>	
<p>Making change in the workplace</p>	<p>Making change in the workplace - a talk about how to do this. Probably delivered by a trade union.</p> <p>could get a trade union to come - e.g. Scottish TUC</p>
<p>Understanding how green companies really are</p> <p>Helping see through 'greenwashing' and judging whether companies are really making a difference on climate change.</p>	<p>Understanding how green companies really are - a talk about seeing through misinformation and green-washing, and understanding what really makes a difference. For example by Friends of the Earth, or Full Fact.</p>
<p>Actions for the Secretariat</p>	
<p>COP 26</p> <p>Members wanted to know more about plans for COP 26, and were worried about whether politicians would make the decisions needed to tackle climate change.</p>	<p>There will be an event at COP 26 highlighting the value of climate assemblies which will have contributions from climate assemblies around the world. Scotland's Climate Assembly has been invited to contribute to this.</p>

<p>Who needs to act to make each of the assembly's recommendations happen?</p> <p>Members wanted to know who each of their recommendations relates to - e.g. which level of government needs to act to make these happen.</p>	<p>Answering this will depend quite a lot on the government's response. So they will wait until the government has responded. This information could for instance be shared in the lead-up to 'weekend 8' when members will get a chance to reflect on, and reply to, the government's response to your recommendations.</p>
<p>Staying in touch</p>	
<p>Getting in touch with assembly members near me</p> <p>Being able to look up and get in touch with assembly members where you live so you can take action together.</p>	<p>The delivery team will make arrangements to set this up for those who are willing to share their details ready for 'weekend 8' to have the most impact.</p>
<p>Meeting members of the Climate Assembly UK</p>	<p>The delivery team will investigate this, using our contacts with this assembly.</p>
<p>Finding out about other groups</p>	
<p>Finding out about other groups working on tackling climate change</p>	<p>We will create some signposting resources, to help you find other groups you can get involved with.</p>

2.4 Prioritising support

Members had shared with us a rich mixture of support needs, which we used to come up with some initial ideas. As there was more than we could deliver within this project we used a follow-up questionnaire to help prioritise these, by asking which members were most likely to attend.



Responses to the survey question: 'Which of these activities are you likely to come to, if we organise them?' Number of respondents selecting 'No' are shown as negative numbers to help show the data.

We also asked for more information about one of their aims:

'Educating the public was one of the most popular things mentioned, but we are not sure what support would help you do this. If you have ideas about what support you need to help educate the public about their climate impact please share your ideas here:'

Only 5 members responded to this, mentioning public meetings or workshops, including working with local housing authorities to hold events on lifestyle changes people can make. One person wrote:

"It would be good to learn how to communicate more effectively with people and find out if we can maybe be climate ambassadors or something."

2.5 Delivering support to members

We discussed the prioritised ideas with the Secretariat and reached out to organisations that we thought members might be interested in hearing from. As members were to be attending events at COP26 without Secretariat support (due to the limited number of tickets available), and there was media interest in speaking with them, we prioritised media training even though it initially attracted less interest than some other options.

Based on our conversations with the Secretariat and identifying activities which we felt best delivered on member's objectives, we ran the following series of online evening events:

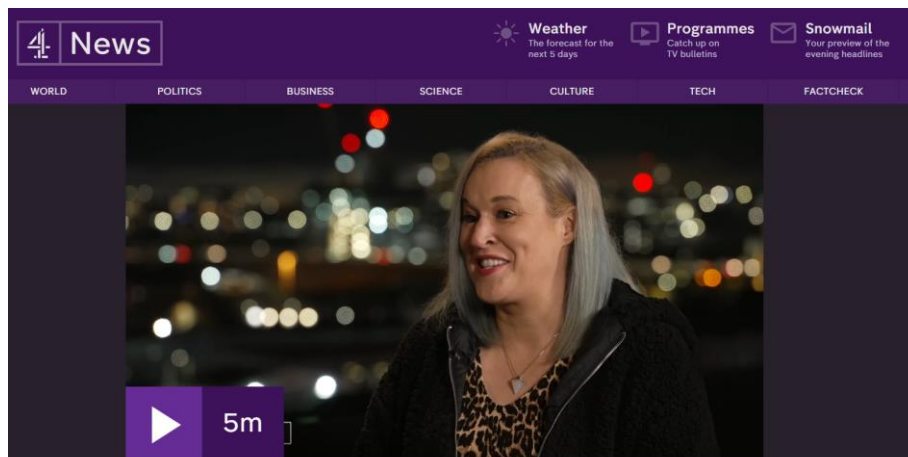
- [Media training](#) (26th October 2021) - to help members prepare for chances to speak with the media.
- [Fact-checking](#) (22nd November 2021) - this was delivered with the help of Full Fact to help meet needs around finding out reliable information.
- [Advocacy training](#) (27th January 2022) - to help members learn about contacting politicians, and making the most of these opportunities.
-

Across the three events, the group fluctuated slightly, with different people coming to different activities. We generally had 8-12 members at each event. All the events were recorded, uploaded to youtube and shared via email and on the members' message board platform, [Mobilize](#). Links to the recordings have been shared above.

Alongside these events, we alerted members to the programme of events both at COP itself and as part of the [People's Summit for Climate Justice](#). We also circulated some articles about greenwashing.

We captured feedback from members about these events in our Closing Questionnaire, shown in the Learning and Evaluation Section. We also received some feedback by email with participants saying that they found the events very helpful, their confidence was improved, and the presenters were 'excellent'. 'Spot on' and 'very comprehensive' were offered as comments.

Members were able to use the skills they had developed as they were interviewed by the media and attended Ministerial meetings.



28 Oct 2021

'It doesn't need to be the end of life as we know it, there is a way forward for us' – Climate Assembly UK member

Assembly Member Nadine speaking to Channel 4 news (NB: Nadine has been wrongly labelled in the headline as a Climate Assembly UK member instead of Scotland's Climate Assembly member)

2.6 Supporting members to take the next steps

Following these activities we moved towards helping members plan the next steps for themselves as a group.

At around this time the Assembly reconvened for the weekend of 4-6th February to assess the government response. During this weekend dedicated time was set for the 73 members present to discuss their aims for future involvement as part of their breakout group work. Notes were captured by facilitators and we looked for themes across these responses.

These responses, alongside what we'd heard earlier, led us to design a subsequent 'Next Steps' event around two main aims:

- Holding the Scottish Government accountable for acting on our recommendations
- Helping each other achieve change in our local communities

11 Assembly Members attended this next steps event on Thursday 24th February. Ultimately the group who came together chose to focus just on the first of these aims during the session. We asked members to picture what success would look like one year on, and think about the first steps needed to move towards this goal. Each group worked independently before sharing back with each other.

Members outlined a vision of success that included:

- Being visible to politicians and the public, having ways of holding the Scottish Government accountable for acting on their recommendations
- Focussing down on 1-2 goals that they could get into more deeply as a group. Working with experts to stay up to date.
- Coming back as a whole assembly one year on to assess how far the Scottish Government had got

We focussed on what they could achieve as a group but also set aside some time to ask what further support could help them achieve if this could be found.

In discussing next steps we asked for a small group of volunteers who could take on the different roles needed to run future meetings. We committed to exploring what further support might be available for the group, and updating them on what we found.

Image: Picturing Success template used during our Next Steps event

Aim: Keeping the Scottish Government accountable for making progress on your recommendations

1) Picturing Success (10mins)

Imagine this aim has gone to plan, what does this look like 1 year on?

What kind of things are you doing together? What have you been able to achieve as a result?

Think about this individually for 2 mins first

Then discuss your ideas together and agree 3-4 key points to write down here:



Image credit: "ppf" by ChazWags

Group 1	Group 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When climate is discussed, Scottish Government know we will pick up on it, we are still here. • Being in the public eye. Holding onto identity as being picked as voice of Scotland (but are we still...?). • Being able to motivate government. • We need the ability to stay up to date. We'll need to stay informed. Experts have helped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconvened for weekend 9 to assess govt progress in 2022 against the targets • Infrastructure could change locally if the recs are pushed for • Tool libraries • Tree planting • Recycling figures and private care driving figures - stat comparisons to see if improvements made

<p>us. Perhaps it's something the climate change committee could help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming a formal network • Having contacts we can use to prod government • The people of Scotland, but informed - we could be there to test the water. • Ripple effect of our knowledge to others. Informing others. (Experts advice needed for us to feed off). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pushing companies to do better - and making public that information (citizen stakeholders) • Funding to maintain the assembly - grants, lottery funding • Lobbying - asking their MSPs to find out what Ministers are doing • Rather than constantly checking everything, focussing on one or two goals and getting into them a bit more deeply - and working who to talk to • Education about climate change - effective strategies like during the pandemic - enabling effective personal change • Taking that role on - and talking to colleagues - embed thinking into the workplace - training in the workplace (signposting)
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2.7 Continuing the journey

The Assembly Members we worked with wanted to continue to hold the government to account. They wanted to stay visible, and continue to push for action on the climate emergency.

At our Next Steps event a group of volunteers came forward to continue running meetings for interested Assembly Members. The delivery team met with this group on 7th March to make sure they were set up for organising future meetings.

2.8 Wrap- up survey

After the next steps events we shared a final survey with members who attended one or more of the events, to hear their feedback and learn more about providing support like this in the future. These results are shown in the Learning and Evaluation Section.

3. Learning and Evaluation

We used an online questionnaire at the start and end of this project to help identify members' aims and support needs, as well as capturing further learning about supporting members to stay involved, and to evaluate the support we provided. The results are shown below.

3.1 Starting Questionnaire

The first online questionnaire was sent out to all members by email. 35 out of 101 members filled it in.

Members' aims and support needs

We asked members to rank a set of statements in order to tell us what they'd most want to achieve from working together, and what support would help them achieve this. The results from these two questions were included in section 2.1 above.

How members felt about staying connected

In the survey shared with assembly members at the start of this project, we gave a quick explainer about this opportunity for members to start connected and asked: *'Are you interested in connecting with other assembly members in the way we've described above?'*

- 21 answered 'Yes',
- 13 'Not sure'
- 1 'No'

We followed this up by asking: *'If you answered no, or not sure, above: is there anything that is putting you off getting involved?'*

- 10 mentioned the time commitment, including uncertainty about how large this would be and in one case having a lack of energy at the moment.
- 3 respondents were unsure without knowing more about what the purpose or impact would be.
- 2 other comments were respectively about dissatisfaction with the availability of realistic options for responding to climate change, and with how their views had been received by other members during the process.

What impact did members hope the assembly would have 2-3 years on

We asked: *'In your own words, what impact do you want Scotland's Climate Assembly to have over the next 2-3 years?'*

21 comments directly described recommendations being implemented, and progress being made on tackling climate change.

"I hope that the recommendations will galvanise all sections of society into action and enable Scotland to tackle the climate emergency"

Alongside this there were a range of more specific points made. 6 comments talked about the importance of public awareness, including lifestyle changes.

"Help to take people that weren't in the Assembly on the same journey, to see what they can do and to help society make the "jumps" that are required rather than tiny steps."

"I would like there to be ongoing engagement with scot gov, other organisations and activist groups and citizens about tackling the climate crisis. People need to develop their awareness of the climate emergency and make changes and need forums and support to help them do this, so they aren't swept away by change, both now and in our near future and can have positive impacts, adjust and make choices in a more conscious way."

4 comments mentioned specific policy aims within the wider agenda, including awareness of how different parts of the population are impacted by the changes needed.

3 comments outlined a range of future activities for Climate Assembly Members:

"Already we are hearing more in TV advertising and radio advertising about the need to change, I would like to see this continue but also hear more publicly on the news from Holyrood that climate change is being discussed there, potentially with assembly members there to assist."

"I want SCA to champion minority and underrepresented groups opinions so that all changes in regards to climate change have fairness and equitability at the forefront, including how we structure communities and infrastructure especially in regards to transport."

"Continue to inspire and bring people together through the sharing of information and pleasant discussion."

There were 2 comments expressing concern about the recommendations reached, including their impact on poorer people. And 2 respondents expressed scepticism about whether the climate assembly would have an impact.

Other questions asked at the start

We also asked a set of practical questions to help us organise the support (Q7,8,9,10). The main points from this section were a strong preference for online evening events, and for email communication.

A wider set of questions about members' attitudes regarding Citizens Assemblies were included at the request of the Assembly research team; these findings were passed over to them (survey questions section 2). This also included the demographics of those responding (survey questions section 3).

3.2 Closing Questionnaire

After the Next Steps event we sent a closing questionnaire to the smaller group of members who attended events run as part of this support project. 8 out of the initial 35 respondents filled this in.

Visions for what the group could achieve together

Following up the questions asked during our Next Steps event we asked the following two questions about their vision for what they could achieve together. A selection of their responses are included below in their own words.

Picture things one year from now. What impact do you hope to have achieved as a result of you staying connected with other assembly members?

"A feeling that we made a difference and changes happened because of our action"

"To have stayed relevant and informed, and individually deepened our knowledge on issues that matter to each of us most so that the Assembly as a whole has better than surface level knowledge. We will have used this to evaluate the effectiveness of government measures on climate change and have published our responses with the expectation that they will be seen and respected by MSPs, independent climate groups and members of the public."

"To still be engaged in the climate discussion with other assembly members. I want to see how the group evolves and then decide if there is a role for me within the group."

"As a unified group better chance of being listened to therefore greater opportunity for change"

"To hold government accountable"

"We would be able to influence government and the public in their attitudes to Climate Change."

In your own words tell us what you hope the group will look like one year on. What kind of things will you be doing together?

"The group will be regularly invited to climate committees in Scottish parliament, invited to parliamentary debates, we shall be connected with other climate assemblies globally to learn from their action, build a citizens climate assembly summit"

"We will be at the centre of a network that connects us to members of parliament, independent climate experts and the public/media. We will be well informed on developments regarding the issues our recommendations address, and will scrutinize and respond to the government's measures in response to these publicly."

"Possibly a committee with an overall co-ordinator, and focus groups monitoring the government response to specific recommendations."

"Confident, informed, strong and able to hold the Scottish Government accountable and responsible to timescales and for inactions"

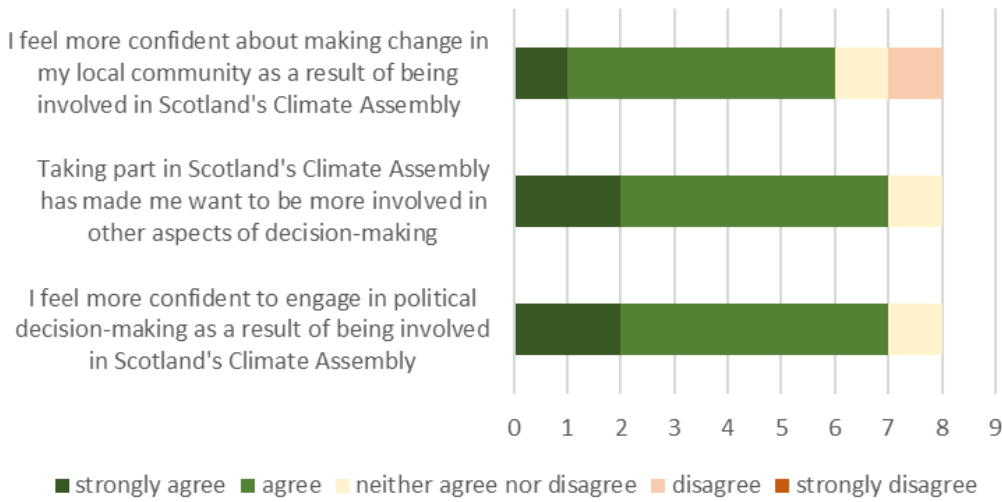
"I would to see the group coming together as campaign awareness group for life style change"

"Working together to pursue agreed targets is a likely goal."

Views about Citizens' Assemblies and personal ability to achieve change

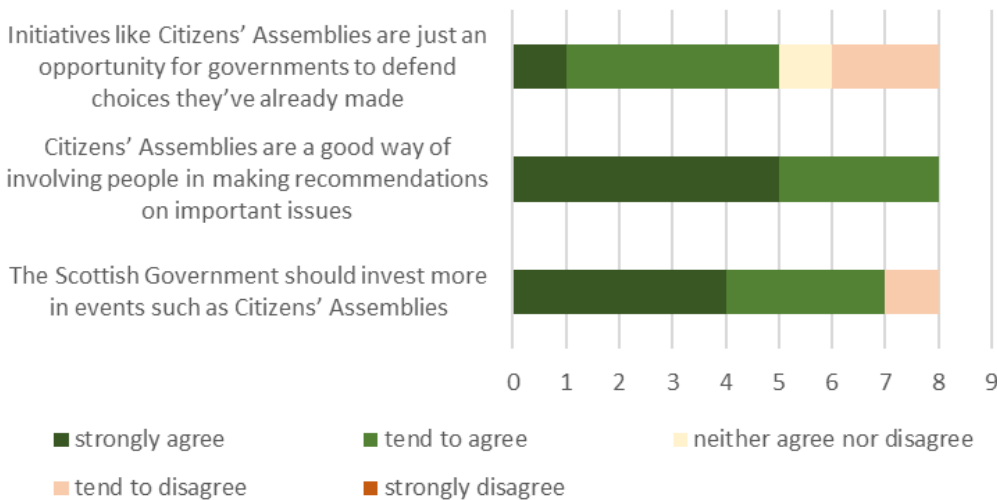
We asked respondents to say how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements. These questions were used by the research team at earlier stages of the assembly, including in our earlier questionnaire, allowing some comparison over time – though this final survey was just filled-in by 8 more actively involved members.

Members' views about making change



Members' views about making change, from our Closing Questionnaire

Members' views about Citizens' Assemblies



Members' views about Citizens' Assemblies, from our Closing Questionnaire

Attitudes towards taking action

We also asked members some questions about what they have done since the end of the assembly, and their attitudes towards taking action.

Since taking part in the assembly have you made any changes to your lifestyle to try and tackle climate change? If so, please briefly describe some of the changes you've made.

Members talked about purchasing less and recycling more, eating less meat or red meat, and using public or active transport.

Since taking part in the assembly is there anything else you've done to try and achieve change on the issue of climate change (beyond changes to your own lifestyle)? If so, please briefly describe some of the actions you've taken.

Respondents mainly described talking informally with friends and family about the need for lifestyle changes. One person described signing petitions. Another had stood as a council candidate on green issues, become a trustee of a climate action charity and received training as a Scottish Communities Can 'Community Conversation Facilitator'.

Is there anything that puts you off taking action to tackle climate change? Please describe any barriers you face.

Barriers included: mental well-being; work and family constraints; government inaction, and powers being held at UK-level.

Is there any other support that could be provided to help you overcome these?

The only comments were about more information on the relationship between the Scottish and UK government, including: "...helping us to contact, influence and be recognised by the UK Government in cases where the changes our report has called for require reserved powers." And about free climate anxiety therapy.

Attitudes towards staying connected

In the final survey we asked:

Are you intending to stay connected with other assembly members, and work together in the future?

4 answered, 'I'm very likely to stay connected'; 3, 'I'm somewhat likely to stay connected'; 1, 'I'm somewhat unlikely to stay connected'; 0, 'I'm very unlikely to stay connected'; 0, 'I'm unsure or would rather not say'.

We also asked:

Is there anything that puts you off staying connected with other assembly members? If so, please describe.

There were 2 comments about time constraints, and one about health issues. Another cited uncertainty about whether it would have a positive impact as a barrier to investing their time.

Feedback about our support

We asked two further questions to gather feedback about the support offered.

What (if anything) about these events have you found most useful?

Amongst those who responded, members highlighted a range of different aspects, shown below:

"...I found the Advocacy training very helpful to give confidence with engagement with ministers/MSPs"

"The full fact workshop was fascinating, giving me a new perspective with which to cut through political language and get to the truth..."

"I found them all very useful."

"Media training was really helpful as it opens my confidence to know its ok not to know all the facts"

"Advice on dealing with the media was very useful."

We'd like to learn how the support we've provided could be improved for any future assemblies. Do you have any suggestions for what we could do differently in the future?

There were only 2 suggestions raised, both seemingly focussed on the main assembly weekends. One highlighting a desire for more social connection, and another for more information about topics being discussed before meetings.

3.3 Reflections from the delivery team

This project has been a welcome chance to work on how accountability and the future participation of Assembly Members can be built into Citizens' Assembly. We've learnt a lot from working with a committed and enthusiastic group of Assembly Members.

Along the way we've made some observations about what has worked well and what has worked less well. We've also reflected on things to think about for building-in this kind of ongoing support for future assemblies.

What we've been able to achieve:

- At the end of this process there is a small group of very committed Assembly Members who are keen to stay working together. They are keen to reach out to the wider Members of the Assembly, and are thinking about how to involve them. They recognise the different levels of commitment members might wish to contribute and are keen to set regular 'check in' points with a hook around either engagement with politicians / government or getting together in person.
- We hope that our support has helped them think through their aims, and provided some practical training in areas like advocacy, engaging with the media and understanding evidence.
- We have also helped the group with the more immediate next steps of being able to continue meeting and communicating with each other, identifying volunteers to take on different roles. At the time of writing we are not yet able to share how others can connect with the group, but will also be ensuring this is in place.
- It is hoped that a connection the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee will continue, and that this will provide a link into existing Parliamentary scrutiny of this topic, and help members keep the Government to account for acting on the Assembly's recommendations.
- We were vastly assisted by being able to bring 73 Assembly Members back together for Weekend 8 to consider their reaction to the government response. This encouraged them to think more clearly about ongoing accountability and enabled them to share their activity and learn from each other about what ideas they might have to work together in the future.

Reflections on our approach and lessons for the future:

Thinking about the ongoing participation of Assembly Members hasn't historically got the attention it deserves when Citizens' Assemblies are being designed and set-up. This project

was a welcome step towards this, though there are clear opportunities to achieve more by building this focus in from the start.

- Amongst other benefits this could allow support for further participation to occur during the process of the Assembly itself. Such as, providing training or advice about ongoing participation as part of the main assembly weekends. This could help members in understanding how their recommendations will be integrated into the policy process, and the layers of decision making.
- Helping members connect with each other during the process of Assemblies can also lay the groundwork for ongoing involvement. The fact that this Assembly was entirely online, including the weekend 8 which we had hoped would be in person, presented a particular challenge. Including a 'reunion' event in the planning for future assemblies, especially if they are online, could help with this.
- Planning-in further participation from the start also means that opportunities for further involvement can be introduced while members are still actively engaged, rather than trying to bring people back together later on.

Working with this group helped us think more about the range of different aims that ongoing participation can have. One challenge we faced was navigating this range of options with a fluctuating group of Assembly Members. Having ongoing support built-in from the start could help plan for how to support different options in different ways. Some of the different aims, and emphases, that emerged included:

- Holding governments accountable for acting on recommendations. Within this there are big differences between taking more of an insider, or outsider, approach to pushing for change.
- Promoting the Assembly's recommendations to a wider audience, such as by talking to the media.
- Supporting members as individuals to become more active politically or civically. Over the course of the Assembly, members had learnt a lot about the importance of climate change and were often keen to take more action on this topic in their own lives.
- Members felt they had a unique position as ordinary people who'd been given the opportunity to learn about this issue together. Some members wanted to make use of this by reaching out to the wider public and helping 'cascade' what they'd learnt onto others. This included thinking about both public education and attending events in schools. It would be worth thinking how to integrate this into future assemblies.
- Emotional support. During the Assembly, members had learnt a lot about the severity of the issue of climate change and had been affected by this. Staying involved will in turn throw up its own pressures. Some members saw staying connected as a way of helping with this.

- Sharing experiences of taking part with others. Having taken part in an Assembly, members are well-placed to advocate for this method being used in an effective way in the future. This could include helping future participants get the most out of these processes, and making sure ongoing support is built into the design. We know participating in Assemblies can feel overwhelming, especially for people who aren't used to sharing their views and experiences and being listened to. A 'buddy system' for less confident Assembly Members could help with this pastoral care that some Assembly Members need to grow and maintain their self-confidence.

It has been important to think about the level of commitment needed from members. As the project has gone on, we've thought more about the importance of different levels of commitment.

- Ultimately, we have identified a small group of members who are willing to play a bigger role in enabling an ongoing network to continue.
- Asking individual members to take on small tasks needed to form a network was effective in encouraging members to take ownership of this.
- This group have in turn been thinking about how to involve other members in a manageable way, for example setting up working groups based on different areas of their recommendations or communicating with the wider group at key milestones.
- Planning for different members to take on different levels of involvement is important for enabling ongoing participation given the shift from taking members through a structured, time bound process in which they are given a gift of thanks for their time, into something more open-ended and self-directed.

Keeping governments accountable is not an easy task. Members were clear that ongoing support would be needed to make this manageable – for example to make sure they can stay on top of the latest developments. We hope that linking them with the existing mechanisms for Parliamentary scrutiny of Government will help achieve this.

One question raised during the process was how long a scrutiny role for Assembly Members should last. After all, the committed members cannot recast the recommendations with the same degree of representative authenticity as the fully sampled group were able to. This will no doubt have a bearing on how assembly recommendations are framed, perhaps with clearer timescales and responsibilities. This in turn raises questions about how Citizens' Assemblies should fit with ongoing forms of citizen engagement.

3.4 Next Steps: How the journey is continuing

The Assembly Members we worked with wanted to continue to hold the government to account. They wanted to stay visible, and continue to push for action on the climate emergency.

Through conversations with Assembly Members, the delivery team, and the secretariat a promising option emerged for supporting this. This was to work with the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee who currently perform this accountability role for the climate emergency in the Scottish Parliament. A group of Assembly Members gave evidence to the Committee shortly after our Next Steps event, on the 1st March, and talked about being involved in on-going accountability³. The Committee has been supportive of this.

Since then the delivery team met with the group of Assembly Members volunteers on 7th March to make sure they are set up for organising future meetings. It was decided that we would attend their next meeting to discuss this opportunity to link further with the Net Zero Committee to continue holding the government to account, as well as providing any more information we'd be able to find about ways they could be supported further in the future.

As we reach the end of this project, we will be leaving Assembly Members able to connect with each other, with a vision of what they want to achieve, and some potential avenues for connecting with existing accountability structures and for exploring potential sources of further support.

³ See: <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/what-was-said-in-parliament/NZET-01-03-2022?meeting=13615&iob=123595>