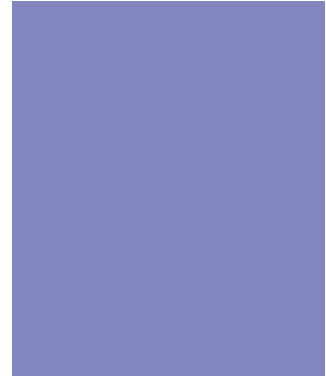
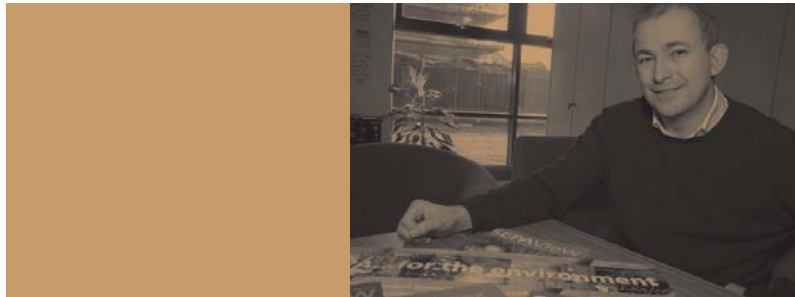


# revitalising our environment

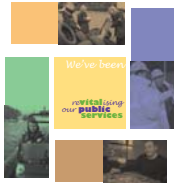
UNISON's manifesto  
for Scotland's  
environment



We've been  
revitalising  
our public  
services



Public services  
protecting our environment.



# Working in UNISON to protect the environment

## Introduction

Public service workers are at the forefront of protecting the environment and the quality of life for everyone in Scotland.



Photo: David Blades

**David Wilkinson** is a Project Engineer with Scottish Water Solutions, based in Aberdeen. Teams like his around Scotland have made hundreds of environmental improvements in the last few years. These include projects to upgrade waste water treatment facilities so that Scotland can meet new European laws on waste water. Benefits include: cleaner beaches and seas; preventing pollution getting into water courses; protecting key Sites of Special Scientific Interest, bird sanctuaries and other important areas. Among a number of planned rural projects is one to stop effluent from overloaded septic tank systems seeping into the river Feugh and downstream into the Dee. One small community of fewer than 40 houses near Banchory will be connected to the public sewerage system for the first time.

Dave said: "Some untreated effluent is finding its way down into the Feugh, which flows to Banchory. It is affecting the water course which is one of the better known for salmon in the area. Scottish Natural Heritage believes it is very important. We're going to be laying a new sewer through the community, collecting all the effluent and taking it to a new pumping station and from there, via existing mains to Banchory where it will be properly treated."

UNISON Scotland represents 160,000 members delivering public and related services. We want to highlight the value of quality public services and the ways in which our members contribute directly to environmental protection and action on climate change.

Global warming threatens the future of life on earth as we know it. It already kills 150,000 people annually and causes five million serious illnesses (World Health Organisation). Millions are at risk if nothing is done. The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says that climate change poses as great

a threat to the world as war.

However, we can work together to counter the threat. It is still feasible and everyone can do their bit. UNISON believes that concerted and fair international action by governments is key. Experts agree that, if there are urgent policy changes at local, national and international levels, we can prevent the worst-predicted effects. Every country must act to cut carbon emissions.

In the coming months and years we will all be making changes in our personal and our working lives. Public opinion has started to recognise the need for action. There is huge concern especially among young people. We can all take responsibility for the future they deserve.

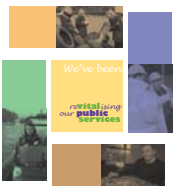
North Lanarkshire Council's Environmental Wardens won a top Keep Scotland Beautiful People and Places Award in 2007. UNISON members **Catherine Di Nardo, Angela Jeffrey, and Nykola Munro**, are part of the award-winning team of ten wardens, whose efforts improve the environment for people at home and at work.

They arrange for the removal of abandoned cars and other vehicles, investigate fly tipping and litter complaints, enforce smoking legislation, provide educational talks to schools, check vehicle emissions, and work pro-actively with other council departments and external bodies. They can issue fixed penalty notices for littering, fly tipping and smoking offences. Nykola said: "The award reflects the good work carried out by our section in educating people about the benefits of living in a cleaner and healthier environment".



Photo: Alan Wylie

UNISON Scotland is a member of Stop Climate Chaos Scotland - the first trade union to join. We campaign to green the workplace and to promote sustainable policies for our vital public services. We campaign to eliminate fuel poverty and to promote a balanced energy policy. Our outlook is international, linking the effects of climate change around the world with campaigns for social justice and access to safe drinking water for all. Our opposition to water privatisation in developing countries is mirrored by our campaign to retain Scottish Water in public control.



# Protect the environment

Tackling global warming is vital for the health of the planet but there are many other important ways in which a clean and healthy environment around us contributes to overall good health. Across the country, in rural areas and in towns and cities, thousands of people are working in UNISON to protect the environment for present and future generations.

Public services have a major role to play and all are starting to prioritise green issues with some excellent examples of good practice. All 32 councils have pledged to make significant changes through Scotland's Climate Change Declaration. Every employer, private and public, large and small, must work to reduce waste, boost energy efficiency and to cut their carbon footprint.



Photo: Douglas Robertson

**Peter Singleton** heads up climate change and energy policy at the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. His team in the Emerging Issues Unit look at what changes are already underway on rainfall and riverflow in Scotland and plan for adapting to those. They also work with the public and private sectors to cut carbon emissions. "SEPA, as every organisation should, wants to embed awareness, understanding and action on climate change into all the work it does" he says. He is pleased that a number of big businesses say they accept the need for urgent and effective action, but will they take meaningful action? "Talking to business leaders who have seen Al Gore perform, you can see that he clearly hits them between the eyeballs and they walk out with a very different attitude," he says. However the

message has not got through to everyone. "Some smaller businesses are interested and some are setting up new 'eco' businesses, but others are struggling to keep their business afloat. If we turn up at their door with new regulations, it is the last thing they want to hear." He says it is a challenge for the UK government to convince such people they should bear costs which they feel go beyond what other countries are doing. Yet there are business benefits to acting now, and fast. Wind farm technology shows how Scotland could have already been a world leader, as Denmark currently is. Peter said "We have a phenomenal wind resource but Denmark is the leading manufacturer of wind turbines. Thirty years ago it was the UK. But the investment wasn't continued. People relied on oil. It is important that the present interest in renewable and low carbon technology is followed through to provide Scotland and UK with a new thriving industrial technology".

UNISON members work in a wide range of environmental roles including: park rangers; inspectors, scientists and other jobs in the Scottish Environment Protection Agency; council staff across the spectrum of local authority jobs including cleansing, waste recycling, planning, environmental health officers and more; water and sewerage posts in Scottish Water; and health service staff participating in schemes to save energy. They:

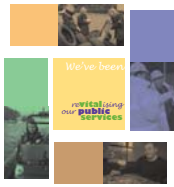
Senior Countryside Ranger **Graeme Archibald** helps protect one of Scotland's most beautiful lochs. He works with nearly 30 rangers who cover the whole of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. Nearly all are UNISON members. Graeme and his team on the loch itself ensure the safe and proper use of the water by all visitors, particularly the owners of the 5,500 boats registered there. The National Park's aims include the sustainable use of the area's natural resources and promoting the public's enjoyment and recreational use of all that is on offer there. "We offer information and assistance to people using boats. We can support the rescue service by responding to emergency calls. We also do a lot of educational work with schools." Other staff include wardens who have a range of duties including keeping the loch shores and picnic areas and other parts of the park clear of litter. Sadly too many people drop litter even in such lovely surroundings. However Graeme says his must be the best job in Scotland - to be out in such a scenic area encouraging people to look after the environment globally and locally. Some tasks might seem small - things like advising boat owners against refuelling on the loch due to the risk of spilling, but he says it is all "part of the bigger fight against climate change."



Photo: Alan Wylie

- Help protect our rivers, land and the air we breathe
- Provide clean, safe water for home, work and industry
- Keep our towns, cities and countryside clean and tackle noise pollution
- Raise awareness of global warming and other environmental issues
- Support the three Rs - reduce, reuse, recycle

- Promote sustainable ways of living and working



Our members' ordinary every day jobs directly impact on the quality of life and health of Scotland's citizens. They are keeping our communities free of litter, collecting household and business waste, providing healthy food to school children, ensuring new buildings meet stricter environmental and energy efficiency targets and working in countless other ways to make sure we can all enjoy the benefits of modern living in a sustainable way. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is a key principle in tackling climate change.

## **Everyone has a role to play and you do too.**

UNISON Scotland members are also active in their branches and workplaces, promoting environmental policies and encouraging employers to look at innovative ways of cutting carbon emissions. A list of ten things to do to tackle climate change is below, and is a starting point for action.

## **Ten things to do to tackle climate change**

- 1** Reduce, Re-use and Recycle – and raise these and the environmental concerns which mean most to you with your elected representatives at surgeries, on the doorstep or by email/letter.
- 2** Cut energy waste and support renewable energy sources.
- 3** Get your UNISON branch to raise with your employer the need to develop an environmental policy and strategy, auditing current use and procurement and setting targets to reduce the carbon footprint.
- 4** Support UNISON's Food for Good Campaign - for healthy, locally sourced food in schools, hospitals, prisons and across the public sector. Including supporting fair trade and organic products.
- 5** Use public transport and support increased investment in it.
- 6** Work with your UNISON branch to negotiate a green travel plan at work, with incentives for lower energy transport, cycling, car-share, public transport, walking and the use of lower emissions vehicles.
- 7** Reduce water consumption at home and at work and campaign against the mutualisation/privatisation of Scottish Water.
- 8** Find out what your Ecological Footprint is and work to reduce it. In Scotland we consume so much of the world's resources that if everyone on earth used them at the same rate we would need three planets to sustain us all. Information and a footprint calculator at: <http://footprint.wwf.org.uk>. You don't have to join the Oneplanet campaign to use the calculator.
- 9** Use tools such as the Ecological Footprint in policy development, monitoring progress and awareness-raising.
- 10** Support local and global sustainable development policies and hold politicians to account for delivering on carbon emissions reduction targets.

Doing something, even something small, does make a difference. However, individual actions need to support and be supported by action at government level. Effective incentives, targets and penalties must be set locally and globally. We must put pressure on our elected representatives to respond to the best scientific advice and come up with creative, realistic and fair policies.

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On the web at [www.unison-scotland.org.uk](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk).