

## Appendix A - COP event for children and young people

The Education Operational Delivery Committee instructed the appointment of a young person to preside over a COP event open to senior pupils from across all eleven secondary schools. Nominations were invited from all secondary schools for the post of Pupil Climate Change President. Pupils were nominated from five of our Secondary schools with nominees spread across S3 – S6.

After pupils were nominated, nominees were asked to complete a 300-word application explaining their thoughts on the climate emergency and what they would like to see happen in their city of Aberdeen. A total of eleven applications were received with most being from pupils in S6. Common areas that were raised in the application forms fitted with the four core themes identified in the January Climate Change report, namely: environmental improvements, greater investment in clean and renewable energy production, more recycling and reduction in waste, buying local produce and reducing.

The standard of application was exceptionally high. To ensure a fair and rigorous process, Quality Improvement Manager, Mark Jones, and Quality Improvement Officer, Stuart Craig, selected three candidates for a more formal interview at Marischal College.



### **Pupil Climate Change president appointment**

Charles Turner (at the front of the photograph above), from Aberdeen Grammar School, was successfully appointed to Preside over the COP event and to represent young people as City Climate Change President. In addition to presiding over the event on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March, Charlie will lead climate change events throughout the year and chair the monthly meetings of the newly established Pupil Climate Change Group.

Accompanying Charles Turner in his role will be Best Abalaka, Harlaw Academy, and Aurora MacDonald, Aberdeen Grammar School, as Climate Change Vice Presidents.

## Programme for the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 COP Event

The event was held in the Town and County Hall within the Town House on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.

The event saw Charles give his maiden speech to participants at this years' COP event with young people led to explore the issues as either climate witnesses or Fictional Countries.

The afternoon session provided an opportunity for young people to reflect on all they had explored over the morning and consider their priorities for their city of Aberdeen.



### 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 – Mock Cop 26 Senior Pupil Conference

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| 8.45am:  | Arrival   |
| 9.00am:  | Opening speech – Councillor Malik & First speech from Pupil Climate President   |
| 9.15am:  | Mock COP26 Opening Talk – Sarah Chew  |
| 9.30am:  | Pupils prepare presentation as Climate witnesses or Fictional Countries   |
| 10.00am: | Presentation from Climate Witnesses   |
| 10.30am: | Break   |
| 10.45am: | Presentation from Fictional Countries   |
| 11.15am: | Mixed Groups 1 – Climate witnesses from each sector allocated to each country to share specific details and formulate their plan  |
| 12.15pm: | Lunch   |
| 1.00pm:  | Mixed Groups 1 – Groups formulate plan for their country for each climate witness area  |
| 1.30pm:  | Mixed Groups 2 – One representative from each country and one from each climate area in each group to create treaty bargaining to fill gaps in their treaties   |
| 2.00pm:  | Presentations from each country to summaries their treaty and their plans   |
| 2.30pm:  | Set up from Stuart Craig (QiO) – or another council representative – over the City's Climate Change Strategy.<br><br>Discussion in groups with pupils over their ideas for Aberdeen from a climate emergency and environmental perspective – bearing in mind what they have learned over the day. |
| 3.00pm:  | Finish – Closing remarks from Stuart Craig (QiO), and Closing speech from the Pupil Climate Change President  |

## Speech from Pupil Climate President:

*Thank you Councillor Malik!*

*I am going to keep this short because I know all of you are super excited to get on with all the really cool activities that are planned for you guys today! My name is Charlie Turner and I have recently been given the immense honour of being chosen to be Aberdeen's First pupil climate change president! I'm sure you all have figured by now I am the MOST Scottish person to have ever walked the earth just because of the deeply Glaswegian accent speaking to you right now. obviously kidding, but I moved to Aberdeen three years ago from Washington DC and I am in S6 at the grammar in town, so I would say I have done a pretty good job at integrating, like how I have now recently discovered that haggis isn't a farm animal that's sacrificed every burns night like everyone told me it was! No, but seriously, when I saw that this opportunity was opening, I thought it would be an amazing chance to get involved in the city that I now call home. So, looking around I realize that a lot of us could be in the same situation.*

*With many of our parents or people closest to us working in or having worked in oil and gas, a lot of us have seen the ups and downs of the industry. But is this, this industry, is this our future? That question, the question of our future, the question that I know so many of us ask ourselves every day is something that inspired me when I decided to pursue this position. Aberdeen, like all the billboards say, is the oil capital of Europe. We see that every day when our parents wake up and go offshore, or to do analytical monitoring for a drill well in some office in Rubislaw like my sister does, or even just the staff in general who keep the industry going. but this is quickly becoming the way of the past.*

*Young people see the issues we face. Where will we work? What will we do? And will there even be an inhabitable place to do it? Aberdeen is our city, we are going to inherit it just as our parents did and so too the generation before, but we are different. We are going to work to ensure that there are newer, safer, more independent means of keeping Aberdeen going. We need more green energy positions for hands-on training, more education for the possibility of going into renewable gas and opening new doors for the youth of Aberdeen. We all know the crisis we face, and we also all know the role the co2 from the petroleum that pumps through the veins of this city plays, but we can't just flip a switch and go totally renewable and drive around in solar-powered Tesla's! But it's no secret that we are the ones who are going to bear the weight of the problems the climate is posing. The youngest generations, not only here, but everywhere in the world, must come together to imagine new possibilities, shape our own paths, and remember that at the end of the day, it's just going to be us.*

*That's why these kinds of events are so important. It gives us young people a chance to talk about our big ideas, our big goals, and what we are going to do with our big, big futures in Aberdeen that I'm so, so sure all of us are going to have. I am confident one day that just as it was in its heyday, everyone in Aberdeen will be able to say they work with hydrogen power, or on a solar farm, or work with wind turbines. Those will be the true glory days of Aberdeen, and it's in our power to make it happen.*

*I am so, so honoured to have been chosen to represent the voices of all the youth around me who are passionate about climate change. For me, this is such a special position*

*because it's the first time we young people in Aberdeen have a seat at the table, and I just hope I do a good job representing all of you!*

*So, I am very happy to see everyone in person today, thank God this isn't happening over Zoom, or it wouldn't be as fun! I just want to say a big thanks for making it out here today, and I can't wait to meet all of you as the day goes on!*

*Thank you!*

### **Feedback on the COP event:**

Feedback provided by the pupil participants was overwhelmingly positive. No pupils disagreed with the statement: "I enjoyed this event". Pupils stated that they enjoyed "working with new people" and also found the event to be "informative". The elements of debate with other pupils were a specific area referred to by over 50% of participants. A pupil from Harlaw Academy stated that they:

Had a great time, it really showed me the challenges to do with climate change and how it isn't just a simple solution and why countries struggle to come to agreements.

Pupils expressed for more opportunities to discuss and debate with their peers at other schools. The main takeaway from the event for most pupils was what they learned about other countries and the issues they face about climate change and how these challenges differ from what we face in Scotland. A Bridge of Don Academy pupil stated that:

Solving climate change is more complicated than it seems because you have to take loads of factors into account to make it work for everyone – especially climate refugees.

Our partners at Techfest also produced this report on the event:

### **Expansion on four core themes from 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 Senior Pupil Focus Groups**

#### **Environmental improvements:**

Strong opinions were shared on the need to improve cycle lane connectivity from across Aberdeen to the beach and city centre. The young people thought that a safe cycle route from Duthie Park to Union Street could be an area for prioritisation.

There was also a feeling that the number of cycle lanes ought to be increased and that these should be standard on all main roads where safe to do so. Young people feel that cycling infrastructure in general should be improved and that there was still too much focus on cars and the needs of car users. The need for suitable bike storage or lockers was shared as a barrier to active travel and it was felt that more initiatives to encourage cycling would be beneficial. Bike rental schemes were identified as an important area to progress.

The young people fed back that cycle and walking routes are not consistently well-advertised and could be better promoted on the city website. The group felt that these should be easily and clearly accessible from the landing page.

The young people in attendance spoke candidly about the benefits of improving the pedestrian areas of Union Street to improve the health, ambience and atmosphere of the city. There was a feeling that more vegetation is required and that more flowers and trees would help.

Views were expressed about the availability of Public Transport including provision of night buses and a feeling that improving availability at night would help reduce private vehicle. Issues with the application process for free bus passes was raised as an important issue. It was thought that there should be attempts to simplify and promote the provision further across the city.

Issues with the accessibility of information about public transport were also raised. It was thought that clearer information about bus and train times, fares and the mapping of locations would help more residents make better use of public transport.

There was discussion about the potential to open more train lines, and the Deeside and Fraserburgh routes were noted as possible options. It was noted that links outside of the city are better.

The young people supported increasing the provision of charging stations for electric cars.

### **Greater investment in clean and renewable energy production:**

Young people believe that Net Zero goal should be promoted much further and suggested a further promotion of energy efficient lightbulbs. Some young people sought some assurance that all schools and council buildings (including council houses) use energy efficient bulbs. The ability for lights to turn off automatically when rooms are not in use was noted as important in public buildings. The group noted the lack of solar panels on council buildings including schools.

It was thought that consideration should be given to how to encourage business to switch to sustainable resources.

A general promotion of how to use less energy was suggested as an approach to address the issue of rising energy prices with schemes to improve insulation identified as important. The group noted that current Public Health guidance prevented simple measures such as keeping windows and doors closed being utilised but that there would require to be a focussed campaign as restrictions continue to lift to encourage these good habits.

In planning for the medium and longer term, young people thought the city should embrace opportunities for wind turbines and hydropower given our location on the coast. Kinetic energy pavements were also mentioned as an area to explore. The group recognised that this shift to green energy will require investment in better infrastructure to store renewable energy made in Scotland and that this energy

infrastructure should be better/stronger to decrease the impact of storms on energy supply.

The group would welcome carbon capture techniques. They noted a responsibility to conserving biodiversity given that peat bogs in Scotland are huge carbon sinks.

The young people felt that they should be taught more about renewable energy and that there should be a clear focus on ensuring that all young people understand the impact of the climate emergency and why we need to change. The young people thought that this would best be led by young people for young people and are keen to lead this change.

The group welcomed the expansion of the Hydrogen bus fleet and felt strongly that travelling in buses powered by hydrogen with their free bus passes would help reduce emissions.

### **Buying local produce and reducing consumption:**

Young people were keen to ensure that all supermarkets/grocers dispose of any waste correctly – either to be made into compost or animal feed or to charitable organisations and noted the current arrangements in schools.

The group felt that pre-ordering of food on Council premises should take place wherever possible to reduce wastage and unnecessary mass production of food that is not wanted/needed.

Young people are keen to see organic foods made available to them through the school meals service but note the expense. The group suggest that there requires to be a mindset change in how our food is sourced. They believe equal consideration of food miles and CO2 emissions during food production should be considered before they reach our plates/cupboards.

There was widespread agreement that the knowledge and experience of growing your own vegetables should be in place across all schools and the group. The group would also welcome more input during Home Economics to raise awareness of food nutrition and planning meals with cost, health, and a reduction in food waste in mind.

Food miles are a considerable concern for young people and the group suggested that food miles should be included on all food packaging and that this was as important as the nutritional information. The group feel that a sustained focus on buying local is required and that more information on vegetarianism and veganism should be available.

The young people were keenly aware of the widespread use of foodbanks and would be keen to support these more widely and increase their availability.

### **More recycling and a reduction in waste:**

The last two years has seen a dramatic reduction in the amount of paper used in schools and as a result less comments were made about paper recycling. Young people identified the need for more eco printers but noted that the use of printing will continue to be lower than pre-pandemic levels.

The group feel that all plastic packaging should be removed in school canteens and all waste disposed of appropriately and ultimately through bio-waste so that left over food is turned into green energy.

The group would be keen to see the development of a Too Good to Go App and encourage local restaurants and shops to take part to address food waste.

A young person also believed that large cargo ships should explore the use of sails alongside engines. This would potentially reduce the use of fossil fuels.

### **Summary and next steps**

The young people of Aberdeen City are passionate about climate change and want to help drive the Net Zero agenda. The Pupil Climate Change Group will consider this report at its meeting on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 4.00pm and develop and agree how to prioritise their ideas to support their development of an Action Plan.

Charles Turner (Pupil Climate President)  
Stuart Craig (Quality Improvement Officer)