

Ethical Consumer Annual Conference 2019

**Positive responses
to the ecological
emergency.**

**How consumers, businesses and
campaigners can work together
to help tackle climate change and
environmental breakdown.**

#ECCONF19



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Welcome

Thank you for attending this year's conference.

This year, we've decided to focus on the ecological crisis. The reason for this is probably clear. We must all take action now both collectively and individually to avoid the most extreme impacts of climate breakdown and biodiversity loss.

This year, and more especially over the summer months, we've seen the impacts of global warming perhaps more starkly than ever before, from melting glaciers in Iceland and Greenland, to wild fires in the Amazon and Arctic Circle.

And this is of course the rub. No longer can anyone say they have not been presented with evidence; no one can reasonably hide their head in the sand and claim that they are not in some small way partly responsible for climate breakdown. We are all culpable and must all act.

The changing of the climate was a collective act caused by innumerable individual actions over the last 200 years. Now armed with the science, our route to avert the worst impacts of climate breakdown must be in collective action, each taking responsibility for our choices and acting in unison to change the direction of our societies.

Today, we have workshops on decarbonising the economy, actions for businesses, the circular economy and more.



The wider impacts

Sadly the impacts of the ecological crisis are not limited to geographical features and landscapes. The real world impacts are being felt by people and animals across the globe, and it is often the most vulnerable who bear the brunt of changes to their environments.

- In Nepal, changing rainfall patterns are forcing children into work. Unstable weather pushes farmers to migrate seasonally. Entire families move to work in brick kilns for several months, under enormous pressure to earn as much as possible before monsoon starts. The kilns rely on a form of seasonal debt bondage, whereby the families are offered an advance at high interest rates in exchange for work in the kilns. Sometimes, the labour of children is pledged by parents in an attempt to repay the loan.
- In Borneo, deforestation for palm oil plantations not only directly threatens orangutans by destroying their habitat. It contributes to rising temperatures, leaving their whole ecosystem to face collapse. In the world's most nature-rich areas, these orangutans are amongst 50% of plants and animals that face annihilation due to the climate catastrophe. As industrial agriculture further adds to emissions, it is an extinction crisis in part caused by our unsustainable consumption of animal products.
- In Brazil, rising temperatures and drought have led to the devastating spread of the Amazon fires. Lit by those after agricultural and mining land, they have been enabled by Bolsonaro's government, with its agribusiness backing and its fascist, anti-indigenous agenda. Now the fires are destroying one of the world's most important carbon sinks and accelerating the climate catastrophe further. They show a spiralling relationship between ecological destruction and violations of indigenous and political rights.

The climate crisis is bound up with these humanitarian and ecological abuses, and we have reflected this in our conference line up with contributions from War on Want and via Campesina, who's representatives will be talking about human and workers' rights in an ecological crisis.

A lack of political action

However, perhaps the most worrying aspect this summer was not the evidence of climate breakdown itself but of our political systems' and institutions' refusal to respond to the crisis. Governments from Westminster to Washington and Brasilia to Berlin seem incapable or unwilling to take action on the scale we know is now needed.

This lack of government action is of course compounded by the fact that many corporations are also failing to take their responsibilities seriously, whether it is Amazon's increasing use of un-recyclable packaging or Facebook's inability to stop the spread of climate misinformation in the name of free speech. It is clear that by and large the corporate world is still failing to offer more than business as usual, and clearly this is not good enough.

There are of course notable exceptions. Recently the US clothing company [VF Corporation](#), who produce Timberland, Kipling bags and The North Face brands, announced that it would be boycotting Brazilian leather in response to the Bolsonaro government's response to recent fires in the Amazon, while a number of other brands including Ben and Jerry's (a [Unilever](#) brand) and [Patagonia](#) have joined the climate strike movement.

But ultimately it is becoming increasingly clear that more forceful and targeted action is needed by civil society.

Creating change

We all now need to rise to the challenge; to revolutionise the way we shop, save and live; to take a holistic approach that addresses the results of climate change and not just the emissions themselves; to change our daily habits, from buying organic where possible to changing our bank account; to organise in our communities and fill the vacuum that those currently holding power have left; we need nothing short of a revolution in our everyday lives.

At our conference, we hope to discuss all manner of solutions and tactics. From de-carbonising the economy to closed loop supply chains, we aim to provide delegates with inspiration and practical advice to have a meaningful positive impact.

As ever we hope that you will take an active part in our discussion groups and the Q&A's at the end of each session. Most of all we hope you find the day enjoyable, informative and useful, and that it will offer a way forward for your own campaigns and actions.

So, again, thanks for your participation, thanks to our sponsor, Co-op Bank, and thanks to our investor members and our readers who all help to make today possible.

**Tim, Clare, Sophie
& the Ethical
Consumer Team**



Today's timetable

09:30 - 10:00 Registration

10:00 - 10:30 Introduction and framing

How consumer markets have changed over 30 years in response to climate change and the ecological disaster. Rob Harrison and Fran de la Torre from Ethical Consumer.

10:30 - 10:50 Keynote

A Just Transition. Filipa Pimentel – National Hubs Coordinator of the Transition Network on a just transition to a low-carbon economy.

10:50 - 11:10 Break

11:10 - 12:10 Workshops

- **What will a de-carbonised future look like?**

Josie Wexler - Ethical Consumer hosting a discussion panel with new energy technologies expert Chris Goodall and Mike Berners-Lee.

- **52 climate actions for businesses**

Chris Warburton-Brown - Research Director at the Permaculture Association.

- **Andalucia, climate change and migration**

Delia McGrath - Journalist and SOC-SAT union member.

- **Circular economy**

Lynn Wilson - Glasgow University.

- **Reconnecting communities through creativity**

May Project Gardens.

12:20 - 12:50 Panel

Why we need a holistic approach to the crisis. Introduced by Clare Carlile - Researcher at Ethical Consumer.

- **Delia McGrath - Journalist and SOC-SAT union member on climate change, migration and workers' rights in southern Spain.**

- **Asad Rehman - Director of War on Want on human rights.**

12:50 - 13:40 Vegan lunch from The Real Junk Food Project

13:40 - 13:50 Address from conference supporter The Co-operative Bank.

Maria Cearns - Managing Director of Current Accounts and Savings, The Co-operative Bank.

13:50 - 14:50 Panel discussion

What role does business have in addressing the environmental crisis in a de-growth scenario?

- **Anna Clayton** - Spring Prize coordinator and Ethical Consumer Director on regenerative business.
- **Mike Smyth** - Chair of Energy4All on community energy and ownership.
- **Jay Tompt** - Co-founder of the Totnes REconomy Project and associate lecturer in economics at Plymouth University on de-growth strategies.
- **Miatta Fahnbulleh** - Chief Executive of the New Economics Foundation on a Green New Deal.

15:00 - 16:00 Workshops

- **Regenerative Business Hub**

Anna Clayton - Spring Prize coordinator and Ethical Consumer Director on regenerative business.

- **Creating an ethical lifestyle toolkit**

Clare Carlile - Researcher at Ethical Consumer.

- **The role of arts and culture in making change**

Danny Chivers - Activist at BP or Not BP, author of *No-Nonsense Renewable Energy* (2015) and performance poet.

- **Taking the heat out of climate conversations**

Rosemary Randall - Founder of Carbon Conversations.

16:00 - 16:30 Group-working and networking session: Actions for change

16:30 - 17:30 Panel discussion

Forcing change – perspectives on tactics: What next for the environmental movement? Tweet us your questions for the panel on #tacticsforchange

- **John McNally MP** - SNP environmental spokesperson and member of the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee
- **Guy Singh-Watson** - Founder of Riverford organic farm and organic vegetable box delivery company.
- **Caroline Pakel** - Member of Extinction Rebellion Political Circle for XR UK and the Future Democracy Hub.
- **Mike Berners-Lee** - Author of *There Is No Planet B: A Handbook for the Make or Break Years* and *How Bad Are Bananas? The Carbon Footprint of Everything*
- **Omi** - Youth Ambassador for Action for Conservation

17:30 - 18:00 Beer, wine and networking

Speaker profiles



Rob Harrison

Rob was one of three founder members of Ethical Consumer in 1989. Since that date he has worked as a consultant to NGOs (including Oxfam, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace) on engaging consumers in their campaigns, and as an advisor to government departments (including those in the Belgium, Austria and Brazil) on encouraging the use of ethical consumption and procurement for social and environmental goals. He has also been a consultant to consumer organisations on researching the CSR performance of companies, and to companies (including the Co-op Bank and Lush Cosmetics) on developing world-leading ethical policies and implementing them in practice.

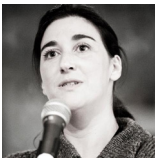


Francesca de la Torre

Francesca joined Ethical Consumer just over two years ago as one of the writer/researchers. She has conducted research into a broad range of sectors but has most frequently covered the food industry.

She also plays a key role in the Spring Prize project which funds organisations around the world which are going beyond sustainability and working to 'regenerate' their environments, communities and economies.

Prior to working at Ethical Consumer she worked for a Modern Slavery NGO and completed an MSc in Public Policy, often exploring the relationship between corporations and the state.



Filipa Pimentel

Filipa works for Transition Network, the small charity which aims to inspire, encourage, connect, support and train communities world-wide as they self-organise around the Transition model.

Filipa is the International Coordinator of the Transition National Hubs and is exploring with people all over the world how to develop the social infrastructure, collaborative culture and new forms of leadership capable of supporting a distributed movement for social change. She also acts as a bridge between Transition Network and the EU Institutions (and other organisations based in Brussels).

Filipa is Portuguese and she has two daughters. She is a compulsive knitter and skilled baker, currently living in Brussels but with a big piece of her heart in Portugal.



Delia McGrath

Delia was born in London and has lived for 28 years in Andalucia. She is an activist in the small trade union SOC SAT, affiliated to the Via Campesina. She is active in education and training, the food sovereignty area, and often acts as the link with the UK for language reasons! She lives in the mountains near the sea, where the plastic greenhouses produce our year-round salad vegetables and give underpaid exploitative work to thousands, mainly immigrants. She has also been involved in campaigns to improve the rights of the soft fruits workers in Huelva and Morocco.



Asad Rehman

With over 35 years of experience campaigning around social, economic, climate and racial justice issues, Asad has been involved in and acted as spokesperson for some of the UK's most hard hitting and transformative campaigns, including Justice for Stephen Lawrence, Jean Charles de Menezes and Stop the War, as well as being involved in global movements around climate justice and migration. An accomplished speaker, Asad has spoken at various UN meetings, conferences, seminars as well as campaign rallies on a variety of global justice issues. In particular, Asad has made pivotal contributions in reframing environmental issues as questions of economic and racial justice.



Maria Cearns

Maria joined The Co-operative Bank in 2002 and has held a number of senior management roles across the Bank. Throughout this time Maria has been a passionate advocate of the Bank's unique customer-led Ethical Policy and has championed banking that makes a positive difference to the lives of the Bank's customers and their communities.

In October 2018 Maria was promoted to Managing Director of Current Account and Savings where she is responsible for delivering the Bank's strategic plans for current accounts, savings and payments. Maria has previously held the post of Chair of The Co-op Foundation for five years and is a member of Amnesty International UK.



Anna Clayton

Anna joined Ethical Consumer in 2013. Since then, one of her highlights has been jointly developing the Lush Spring Prize – a project that aims to support the regenerative movement around the world.

She has worked on a number of consultancy projects over the years, including the feasibility work for the anti-badger cull campaign and the LUSH Spring Prize, and has co-authored the two Shooting Wildlife? reports which explore the links between optics companies and the hunting industry.

Anna also works part-time for LESS – a sustainability organisation based in Lancaster – where she is overseeing the development of a cross-sector food partnership that delivers the work of FoodFutures – Lancaster's Sustainable Food City initiative.

She has just returned from a three month sabbatical, during which she visited and learnt from aspiring regenerative projects around the Mediterranean basin - including Palestine.



Mike Smyth

Mike is a solicitor who lives in Milford, Surrey. He is the volunteer Chair of Energy4All, Wey Valley Solar Schools Energy Co-operative and The Schools Energy Co-operative. Previously he was a partner of Lawrence Graham, a major London based firm of solicitors, for more than 20 years, specialising in corporate and commercial law. He chaired Friends of the Earth Trust until 2012.



Jay Tompt

Jay Tompt is a co-founding member of the Totnes REconomy Project and Local Spark Torbay Community Supported Enterprise, both of which are focused on catalysing citizen-led approaches to economic transition. He's a developer of the 'local entrepreneur forum' model and co-founded the REconomy Centre, a co-working and incubation space in Totnes. He is also part of the international REconomy Community of Practice which aims to spread citizen-led models and support practitioners in a variety of cultural and geographic contexts. Jay is also an associate lecturer in economics at Plymouth University and a fellow of the RSA.



Miatta Fahnbulleh

Miatta is Chief Executive of the New Economics Foundation. She has a wealth of experience in developing and delivering policy to empower communities and change people's lives. She has been at the forefront of generating new ideas on reshaping our economy inside government and out. Prior to joining NEF she was Director of Policy & Research at the Institute of Public Policy Research. Before this, she was a political advisor to the Leader of the Opposition and led on the development of policies ranging from devolution to local economic growth, housing, energy and climate change and transport. She spent eight years at senior levels in the Cabinet Office, including as Head of the Cities Policy Unit, where she was responsible for driving forward the Government's economic devolution agenda in England. Prior to this, she was Deputy Director at the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, leading on localism and local economic growth for No 10. Miatta has a Masters and PhD in economic development from the LSE and a BA in PPE from Oxford.



John McNally MP

John McNally is the Member of Parliament for the Falkirk Constituency and the SNP Spokesperson on the Environment at Westminster.

Mr McNally has been a member of the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee since July 2015. John McNally MP is the Chair of the All-party Parliamentary Group on the Hair and Beauty Industry. He is pressuring for stricter regulations to tackle malpractice and illegal behaviour in the industry.

Mr McNally was poisoned by carbon monoxide due to a faulty boiler in his flat that he was renting in London. Thankfully due to a window which didn't close properly, it helped ventilate the property.



Guy Singh-Watson

Self-confessed veg nerd, Guy Singh-Watson has over the last 30 years taken Riverford from one man and a wheelbarrow delivering homegrown organic veg to friends, to a national veg box scheme delivering to around 50,000 customers a week.

Guy is an opinionated and admired figure in the world of organic farming, who still spends more time in the fields than in the boardroom. Twice awarded BBC Radio 4 Farmer of the Year, Guy is passionate about sharing with others the organic farming and business knowledge he has accumulated over the last three decades.

In June 2018, Guy handed over the reins of Riverford to its staff, choosing employee ownership as the model that will protect the company's ethical values forever and ensure the security of its employees.



Caroline Päkel

Starting in life as a linguist – she is originally half French and half German – Caroline worked as a cross-cultural qualitative researcher on branding and strategy projects for the biggest international commercial names across the world. After 13 years in research, she moved to the innovation world and continued to thrive as a creative facilitator, serving the needs of global organisations such as the Disney companies, Elli Lilly, FINCA, GSK, HP, Kellogg's, Qualcomm, Sony Music or the City of Las Vegas. She now works as a dialogue facilitator, trainer and mirroring coach. See www.totheheart.com and www.carolinepakel.com

She has been working at the heart of Extinction Rebellion since February this year and sits in a number of circles at XR UK central – Regenerative Culture, Consent Advocacy, Police Liaison, People's Assemblies, Future Democracy Hub and Political Circle.

She is a passionate advocate of dialogue for change.



Mike Berners-Lee

Mike Berners-Lee consults, thinks, writes and researches on sustainability and responses to 21st century challenges.

He is the founder of Small World Consulting, an associate company of Lancaster University, which is a world leader in the field of supply chain carbon metrics and management. Small World works with organisations of all sizes and sectors, from the world's largest tech giants to SME's. Mike is a professor at Lancaster University, where his research includes sustainable food systems and carbon metrics. He has made numerous speaking, radio and television broadcast appearances to promote public awareness of sustainability and climate change issues. Mike is the author of three acclaimed books: *How Bad are Bananas?* *The Carbon Footprint of Everything*, *The Burning Question* and his latest book *There Is No Planet B: A Handbook for the Make or Break Years*.

Mike has a degree in Physics from Oxford University, a PGCE in Outdoor Education and Physics from Bangor, and an MSc in Organisational Development and Consulting from Sheffield Hallam University.



Omi

Omi is a 13 year old Youth Ambassador for Action for Conservation. She's interested in learning about sustainable fashion and how we can upcycle items, like plastic from the oceans, into shoes. Omi has written multiple articles including a piece about her opinions on Tesco's canned water. She has also come up with a sustainable and educational Dollhouse system for her little sister and regularly does her own research on conservation and environmental issues.

Q&A with Co-op Bank

We're delighted that this year's conference is supported by The Co-operative Bank. Since the inception of their Ethical Policy in 1992 the Bank has been well ahead of other high street banks with regard to its environmental and social commitments. These commitments have seen it consistently receive 'Recommended Buy' status in our guides to current and saving accounts over the last decade.

Here Maria Cearns, Managing Director of Current Accounts and Savings, tell us how she has witnessed the development of the Bank's Ethical Policy and what more needs to be done by the banking sector to address the climate crisis.

How have you seen ethics develop over your time at the Co-op Bank?

I have been at the Bank for 17 years and it's been fascinating to see how our values and ethics have evolved since the launch of the Ethical Policy in 1992. At that time, business ethics and sustainability were seen as peripheral to corporate activity but that's not the case today as most businesses are acknowledging the need to actively evaluate and manage their social and environmental impacts.

The Co-operative Bank's values and ethics have developed over this time and a key aspect for us has been how we, together with our customers, have consistently identified issues of concern long before any actual change was made to rules and regulations, or even laws to address them. For instance one of the first statements in our Ethical Policy was against the animal testing of cosmetic products, which has now been banned from sale in the EU since 2013.

We want to continue to be forward looking and ensure our ethical focus is relevant, and identifying and working to tackle issues as they arise. Our most recent review in 2015 extended the Ethical Policy beyond who we do, and don't bank, to include four new pillars around products and services, ethical business, ethical workplace and culture and campaigning, as well as incorporating our values and ethics into our Articles of Association.

The problems at the bank have been well documented. Do you now feel that the organisation is on the front foot in terms of finances and safeguarding the Bank's ethical stance?

Despite the well documented issues that we have faced and dealt with in recent years, the values and ethics of the co-operative movement remain as integral to how we operate as a business as they always have been.

In recent years there has been a real resurgence among colleagues in the Bank to embrace the values and ethics in how we deal with our customers every day. New charity partnerships have been formed with youth homelessness charity, Centrepoin and domestic abuse charity, Refuge and we're strengthening the way we work with all of our charity partners to make a difference.

The Bank is in a much stronger place now and we are focused on how we differentiate ourselves in the market and continue to offer ethical banking, products and services to our customers and those looking for an ethical bank for their needs.

What do you think is the most important plank of the bank's ethical commitments?

The decision to base the Ethical Policy on a customer mandate and allowing customers to

have their say in who we do, and don't bank with is the mainstay of our Policy and really sets us apart from other banks. Customers consistently tell us that having their ethical concerns reflected in the Policy is hugely important to them and is one of the main reasons they bank with us.

Without their support, it would be impossible to achieve our ambitions to be among the leading ethical businesses in the UK. I'd like to thank them for their loyalty in sticking by the Bank during the difficulties we experienced a few years ago.

What do you think the biggest success has been in terms of your environmental / ethical policy?

I'm very proud of what the Bank has achieved, in particular our hard hitting campaigns where, in partnership with our customers, we've been unafraid to take a stand on difficult issues we know they care about often long before they enter the mainstream. Whether that's the campaigning on the dangers of unexploded cluster bombs, better regulation of harmful chemicals or the time when Co-operative Bank customers wrote to every MP in the country to lobby for a strong Climate Change Bill.

More recently, we partnered with the UK domestic abuse charity, Refuge, for our 'My money, my life' campaign; highlighting the extent of financial abuse in intimate partner relationships in the UK. This has led to the launch, last year, of an industry-wide 'Financial Abuse Code of Practice' to help those affected by financial abuse. For me personally, as a member of Amnesty International, I'm incredibly excited by our current 2019 campaign to help, develop and train the next generation of human rights defenders through our support of Amnesty International UK's Rise Up programme.

Do you think the sector as a whole is moving quickly enough to fight the climate crisis? What more needs to be done in the banking sector? What are the barriers to a quicker transition to a low carbon economy with regard to banking?

The role of finance is essential to addressing the climate emergency and meeting the Paris Climate Agreement and it is important to recognise the progress that has been made in recent years.

It's just over a decade since the groundbreaking Climate Change Act set UK targets for reductions in CO₂ emissions (which our customers campaigned for) and in that time we've seen further developments such as the growth in ethical investments and the emergence of the green bonds market. Just this month UK pensions regulations came into effect requiring pension funds to factor Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations, including climate change, into their investment decisions.

But there is lots still to do and time is running out. There remains a green finance deficit. Specifically banks continue to finance the extraction of fossil fuels on a massive scale which is clearly contradictory to the transition to a low carbon economy. It's why, since 1998, the Bank has declined finance for the extraction of fossil fuels.

It's for all of us, governments, businesses as well as individual consumers to take action to address the climate emergency.

Why did you choose to support the Ethical Consumer conference?

The ongoing success of our approach to ethical banking relies on the support of ethically motivated customers and this conference is an opportunity to engage with like-minded consumers, campaigners and businesses to share learnings and move forward.

It's great for us to be able to show our support for Ethical Consumer. Since we launched our Ethical Policy, shortly after Ethical Consumer itself was founded, Ethical Consumer has played a key role in raising awareness, campaigning and spreading the knowledge and understanding of important issues. Through their rigorous company ratings, getting behind the greenwash and corporate spin, they assess business' true social and environmental impacts. We value our Ethical Consumer ranking as a 'recommended buy'.

Can you outline what you'll be saying (roughly) at the conference?

I'm really looking forward to sharing the Bank's experience of how a modern bank can play its part in addressing climate change, in particular, showcasing how we address our environmental impacts.

About Ethical Consumer

Ethical Consumer Research Association (ECRA) is an independent, not-for-profit, multi-stakeholder co-operative with open membership, based in Manchester.

Magazine

For over 30 years, Ethical Consumer has been the UK's leading environmental and ethical consumer magazine. It is published bi-monthly, six times a year.

ethicalconsumer.org/ethical-consumer-magazine

Research and consultancy services

Ethical Consumer has over 25 years experience of offering flexible and creative solutions to businesses and NGO's - helping organisations to manage risk, get ahead of the curve on sustainability issues, and work with consumers to have real impact.

ethicalconsumer.org/consultancy

Campaigns

Over many years, we've teamed up with like-minded organisations to help highlight unethical corporate practices. Our campaigning has included work on tax justice, protecting the hen harrier and supporting workers' rights in Andalusia.

ethicalconsumer.org/ethicalcampaigns



Meet the Ethical Consumer team



**Sophie
Billington**



**Simon
Birch**



**Tom
Bryson**



**Clare
Carlile**



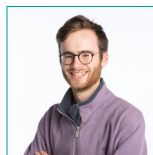
**Elizabeth
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**Anna
Clayton**



**Alex
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**Mackenzie
Denyer**



**Rob
Harrison**



**Tim
Hunt**



**Joanna
Long**



**Ruth
Strange**



**Fran
Thomas**



**Francesca
de la Torre**



**Jane
Turner**



**Josie
Wexler**