

EXTINCTION OR REBELLION

Activist teenagers come and go, but climate-striking Swedish schoolgirl Greta Thunberg went further than most. She ended up speaking to the COP24 UN Climate conference in Poland and what she said reverberated loudly. We're not here to ask the world leaders for change; we're telling them. Climate change is a deadly crisis. Grown-ups: grow up! After years of conferences and targets not reached, pollution is still killing our planet. The agreements made so far say there will be a gradual reduction in CO₂ spewing out, over several years, as the train speeds towards a brick wall. This isn't going to work. We must slam the brakes on now. That's why Extinction Rebellion (XR) was formed on 31 October 2018, with a hundred academics signing a powerful letter about governmental failure in the face of ecological crisis. It's our right and our moral duty to defend life itself, they said.

Sheffield XR produced an equivalent open letter which included 51 local health, education and faith leaders endorsing civil disobedience. Aaron Thierry decided to commit to it at that point, becoming a co-ordinator for the Sheffield group. He has an ecology-based PhD and he's studied the melting permafrost. He knows the crisis is real but says that as a society we don't know how to respond. "We're bottling it up. When people do acknowledge it, it's liberating. It leads to actions." In November, Extinction Rebellion peacefully swarmed to block five bridges in London, with many people involved saying they'd never done any protesting before. Sheffields were among those arrested. Next, a symbolic 'Funeral for the Planet' presented the

Sheffield letter to Council leader Julie Dore. Then in December came co-ordinated demonstrations outside BBC sites demanding truthful climate reporting.

Extinction Rebellion's demands are simply expressed. The Government must tell the truth about how deadly the situation is and develop a plan for the nation to reach zero carbon emissions by 2025. This will take the sort of effort put into the Second World War. It's not a programme or a policy that's needed; it's a massive mobilisation that Extinction Rebellion say will need citizens' assemblies to oversee it, because politicians and industrialists have shown that they cannot be trusted. In Sheffield, the Council are being urged to pass a Climate Emergency Motion, going far beyond the current strategy and joining many other places in a clamour for urgency, directives, powers and resources. This movement has gone global in its first two months. People get it and then get on board. It's based on science, practical pressure and an unstoppable argument. When the main action happens in capital cities, local groups will arrange transport. There will be training sessions in non-violent direct action. Events will start again this month, building up to International Rebellion Week starting 15 April. Watch this space.

<https://rebellion.earth/>

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Published in the February 2019 edition of 'Now Then'
on the page hosted by Alt-Sheff