

## Equality Commission

### KEY:

D: Declan McAleer, MLA  
M: Marina (Education Officer, NIA)  
A: Anne-Marie (Education Officer, NIA)  
SPC: St. Patrick's College  
UIC: Ulidia Integrated College  
BA: Banbridge Academy  
R: Rosemary Barton, MLA  
P: Patsy McGlone, MLA  
J: John Blair, MLA  
P: Philip McGuigan, MLA  
N: Nick (Committee Clerk)

D: We're delighted to have this opportunity to engage with young people like yourselves, and we have been engaging with school students throughout the course of the scrutiny of both pieces of climate change legislation. Indeed, the Education and Outreach departments here in the Assembly has engaged with over 300 pupils throughout the course of June, so we're glad to hear your voice.

We know how important this is to you, to your futures. We're conscious now, if the world leaders fiddle now and don't commit to ambitious climate change targets, that it will be your future that will be in jeopardy. We're taking that very seriously.

This was also, not only is it a commitment from the Paris Agreement, but also it was part of the 'New Decade, New Approach', for getting the Stormont Assembly restored in 2020, that we would work to achieve climate change legislation. We're working our way through that. We have two pieces of legislation with differing targets and differing emphasis, but, we will end up with one piece of legislation, and we want to make that as ambitious and fair as possible, for here. And we certainly don't want this region to be the only region of these islands that hasn't got it's own climate change legislation because that would negatively impact upon us in terms of our international reputation and we'd be neglecting our position as global citizens. So, we're taking this very seriously and we've been engaged for months now, gathering evidence and scrutinising both pieces of legislation and we're hopeful that we will have climate change legislation in the north by the end of this mandate. So thank you.

M: I'm going to hand over to you Anne-Marie now, just to mention that we have Year 13 from Banbridge Academy and it's Year 13 and 14 from Ulidia

A: Thank you very much Marina.

Okay, at this point, we'd like to hear from the schools, so just by way of an introduction, we'll maybe start with yourselves Ulidia, if one person would just like to say hello and maybe give one or two lines if you wish on your views on COP26 or climate change, before we get into the questions.

UIC: Basically, we're just very excited that COP26 is being held in the UK this year and as a group we're hopeful for the outcomes of the discussions and we hope that the global leaders take this chance to make real targets.

A: Thank you very much Ulidia. Thank you. Looking forward to hearing your questions later.

Maybe next up could we say hello to St. Patrick's College?

SPC: Hello.

Many thanks for giving us, the pupils of St. Patrick's College, the opportunity to join the meeting today.

We've been working with Siobhan and Conor from South West College on a project. We've been researching the following areas:

Coastal and fishing, climate and drought, agriculture, transport and buildings.

We have gained a lot of interesting feedback from our questionnaires with young people, and it has been interesting to hear how the discussions at COP26 has been involved in the leaders discussing ways to overcome climate change issues and the need to improve.

A: Okay, thank you very much, and likewise, looking forward to hearing your questions also.

And finally, Banbridge, quick hello from yourselves.

BA: I think climate change, should be more introduced to be educating pupils more, because it's not really introduced to us, especially in schools to teach us about how the effects of carbon emissions affect our environment and ourselves. I think it should be adopted in schools, how to help climate change and how to help that through, maybe creating less homework on paper and possibly something through Google and the use of technology. And, there was a removal of water bottles due to Covid-19, so maybe the re-introduction of water fountains in schools would also help that.

A: Okay, excellent, so again, thank you for your introduction, maybe the MLAs might touch on some of the points you make as we go through the questions along the way. Okay, well, we've met all three schools, now - great.

So, let's start the show off now with some questions to the MLAs. Maybe MLAs the way we'll do this, because we're 15 questions, maybe we'll do one or two points of view and if any MLA wants to chip in after we hear one or two responses, feel free to do so.

So maybe Ulidia, will you start us off for the first question? And maybe, Declan, as Chair, you'd deal with the answer in the first instance? So Ulidia over to you with the first question, please.

UIC: Yeah. What are your plans to reduce fossil fuel reliance in Northern Ireland?

D: Obviously, the reduction of our fossil fuels is absolutely crucial to getting our greenhouse gas emissions down and that's absolutely central to our climate change legislation and to help us to overcome our emissions issue. Of course, that's what is causing the earth to heat up and all of the challenges we have.

Now, the Department of the Economy will soon be publishing, now that's a different department than the one we scrutinise. But they will be publishing their strategy very shortly on how to de-carbonize the energy sector in the years ahead. And some of the things that they will look at, and this is very pertinent to my part of the world, is looking at, for example, enhancing the electricity grid.

You know we have a target, we're sitting at 60% or 70% of our electricity is now produced by green energy.

But a lot of the energy is produced here, where I live in the west but there isn't the infrastructure to take it to the east, where most energy is consumed. So there needs to be investment put into, for example, into the energy grid, the electricity grid. The use of hydrogen, like I see Translink, for example, have hydrogen buses now that don't emit any emissions at all. We actually had the opportunity to get familiarised with one of those buses when it came to Stormont recently. Just no later than today, we got a briefing through the (Committee) Clerk, who had been engaging with the gas networks where they're looking at exciting opportunities, whereby farmers or people who have anaerobic digesters on their farms here in the north, could actually inject some of the methane that's produced on their farm by their cattle and slurry and actually inject it into the gas network. Well, that would be a very exciting prospect.

And indeed, even just recently as well we were down on a farm visit to Castlederg, which is not too far from me here, where they were using solar energy, wind energy, but also the hydrology. You know, on that particular farm, they were able to divert a stream that was on their farm coming down hill, and they're able to divert a section of the stream to put it through this generator and they generating their own electricity for the farm.

So there are lots of exciting opportunities here in the north to harness green energy and I think that we'll play a part in that, in terms of trying to incentivise and encourage it. But these are things which will be central features of the energy strategy that will come from the Department of the Economy very shortly.

A: Okay, thanks very much Declan.

Very quickly, do any of the other MLAs want to jump in with a brief point on that?

M: Anne-Marie I know that Rosemary has to leave at 25 (mins) past, so she might want to.

R: Yeah, you're speaking about reducing carbon footprint, and Declan talked about some things. I think particularly it's going to be quite difficult and, I think, more difficult for those of us living in the west and perhaps St. Patrick's College will be able to empathise with that. For example, our infrastructure is not as powerful as that in the east. For example, we have less buses to places, and if we're going to have hydrogen buses, we don't have those buses in place yet.

For example, I can't walk to the Assembly, I can't take a train to it, I can't cycle to it. So, we're going to have to have a better infrastructure in relation to trying to introduce electric cars in the west. And therefore, we're going to need charging points along the way. We're going to need fast and efficient charging points. I would be travelling from Fermanagh, I obviously don't want to stop in Dungannon for an hour to charge and then head on another two hours to Belfast. So, we have lots and lots more to do to try and reduce our carbon footprint.

But, I think the Minister of Infrastructure is looking at this at the moment. And within our homes, we could perhaps look at the introduction of solar panels to try and warm our homes, to try to perhaps feed into the electricity network.

So, I think we're starting to get there. It will take a little time, but we're starting to get there to try and help with reducing our carbon footprint.

A: Okay Rosemary, thank you very much for the response to that, and Ulidia thanks for kicking us off there with that great question on dealing with fossil fuels.

Rosemary mentioned St. Patrick's, St. Patrick's let's hear from you, and maybe Patsy McGlone would give a response to St. Patrick's College and we'll hear from other MLAs who'll maybe follow up on Patsy's responses.

SPC: Do you acknowledge that climate change is real and poses an immediate threat to the environment and to our health and safety?

P: Thanks very much for that question from St. Patrick's.

I'm sitting in Cookstown here, not a million miles away from you, the areas that would represent, I'm sure some of your friends and indeed some of yourselves would come from them. Donaghmore, Arboe, Moortown, Stewartstown, Kildress and Cookstown, places like that. I'm sure there's a few of you in among the crowd. Great to have you along, by the way.

Now, what I would say is, just on a very practical level, climate change, what does that mean?

Well, Declan, the Chairman, in his constituency has had huge flash floods that have had major impacts upon rural communities. I've stood knee deep in water where there have been flash floods in housing estates where we've never seen them before. I've been down and in around the River Moyola, where houses have been flooded, new houses have been flooded, up about one metre high, water coming into the house, into a brand new house, the house ruined, furniture ruined, all those sort of things.

Now, those things aren't happening just accidentally, it's all as a consequence of climate change. That's before we even get into the social impact of that about further down the line where the temperature is so high that those countries will be denuded of forestry and everything, and you'll see population movements. A huge challenge for us as a society right across the world. And that's before you even move on to what other challenges are presented to us as to how we move to that.

We spent a good part of today, many of you, indeed around St. Patrick's will be from rural areas. We spent a lot of today talking about what 'Just Transition' means. Now 'Just Transition' means, say, for example, that in rural areas, farming communities and people involved in agriculture and the agri-foods sectors, as you know, which you know is a huge part of the local economy up in Dungannon. How we allow people to move from what they're doing now and the methods that they're using now, some of which have moved on a bit, progressed a bit to what we need to do to meet the targets that are being set for us.

That's all part of what we're doing at the moment. We have two Climate Change Bills going through the scrutiny of the Committee.

It's very exciting stuff, at times we're hit with that much information that it's almost overload. But we know that in the interest of your future, we have that challenge to face up to it and make sure that measures are put in place so that good practices and support are put in place to ensure that you have a future. Socially, yes, environmentally, yes, but economically as well, too, because it presents some challenges but a lot of opportunities.

For example, the house insulation, that's a big thing. Transition from the way our houses are currently being heated. I'm sure a lot of you maybe have oil, coal, whatever it is, or how houses are being heated the moment, that has an impact on the climate. So we have to see how we can move to new methods of heating homes. But new methods of heating homes involves installation of those new methods, which involves jobs.

So those are, if you like, the challenges and the opportunities that are presented to us as well, as we move and attempt to change society to new methods of helping to deal with the climate change and stop the climate change. Because if we don't, we're facing really, really drastic circumstances. We've seen the floods in Turkey this year, I'm sure you read about it and saw it on TV. Those things are as a direct consequence of climate change, climate change largely brought about by the activities of man. So, we the people, have to face that challenge and help make a better society for us all.

So thank you very much St. Patricks. Go Raibh míle maith agaibh as an cheist. Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you again.

A: Thanks very much, Patsy, and thanks for the question.

We welcome now John Blair, another Committee Member who's joined us. John, just before we hear Banbridge's question, is there anything you want to add to that question?

J: Just very briefly and my sound wasn't great there at the start. I heard most of what Patsy said, but I didn't hear the very start of Patsy, and I didn't hear the question.

I wasn't sure whether we were on what we can all do individually, or whether we were in more health and safety territory. Maybe if you want to clarify that, I'm happy to answer, but, in the meantime, I'll say, every one of us has something to do. Whether that's the car that we drive and whether we can change it. Whether that's how many lights we leave on in our homes when we moved from downstairs to upstairs, or vice versa.

Maybe we could remind members of our own families, and I'm smiling here because I seem to regularly correct my parents. Remember, this is the older generation, even older than me, because they're two televisions on in a house, but people are only watching one of them. Small, simple things like that.

So, it's our own responsibility at home. It's local, how we can make improvements by talking to each other, talking with others, local councils, other representatives, MLAs, for those people who are not resident in this building, like some of us liaising with other departments and so on. And I used the word local responsibility very deliberately because on top of our local responsibility, when we get it right for ourselves, we should also remember our global responsibility.

One of the factors in relation to climate change, which is often overlooked, when we're looking at ourselves for the right reasons, is the fact that people who've contributed less to

climate change in terms of emissions, i.e. less developed regions of the world. They're suffering most from the impacts of climate change, even though they contributed less to it. So, I like to think that most of us feel some sort of global responsibility in that regard as well. If all that makes sense?

In addition to that, I want to apologise for being late by the way, while all my colleagues were discussing these environmental matters and rural matters earlier, I was at a meeting of the Policing Board, which kept me late. So their fault, not mine, apologies for missing the very start, but very much welcome this engagement and delighted to be part of it.

A: Okay John, thanks very much indeed. And St. Patrick's, thank you for your excellent question.

We move on now to hear from Banbridge, and maybe Philip McGuigan would take the lead on that question when we hear from Banbridge Academy. So, over to you.

BA: The floods in Germany during the summer were caused by global warming. As it rains a lot in Northern Ireland, there's a high probability that similar floods could happen here. What measures should we adopt to prevent flooding in Northern Ireland?

P: Well, thank you very, very much.

I'm first and foremost, I should say, you know, I share your enthusiasm about COP26. Me and Declan were lucky enough to be able to visit Glasgow at the start of the week and participate in COP26. It was very exciting opportunity. It is vitally important that as a result of COP26, there is decisive action across the globe.

Patsy, in his answer did suggest and point to examples where there are floods already happening here in the north. You know, every elected representative will be engaged more, particularly during the winter, but not exclusively, with extreme weather. So, we're seeing that here right across, extreme weather events. It's not just in Germany, it's not just in Turkey. The fires aren't just in Australia and America, they are happening in and having an impact on areas of the north. So you know, whether that is floods or you know, the fires, such as in the Mourne Mountains, and things like that, we do here need to prepare for these growing extreme weather events. We all enjoyed a very warm spell of weather this summer. I think on three days in a row, we experienced the hottest temperatures recorded here in the north. Again, this is another symptom of climate change.

So, what do we do and how do we prepare? Well, first thing we need to do is have climate legislation which sets the benchmark for moving forward so that we here can play our part in reducing this global phenomenon. We also need to invest in our infrastructure. I know Rosemary and Declan and I suppose Patsy talked about maybe inadequacies with infrastructure in areas that they represent but, right across this region, we need to invest in our water infrastructure. We need to build defences against flooding, particularly along our coastal areas, but not exclusively. And, we need to look at planning with regard to where we actually build houses, properties, businesses, because maybe 20 years ago, somewhere where it would have been safe to build, isn't safe today because of climate change and potentially could have the risk or the threat of flooding. So, that's some other things that we, as politicians need the institute to help society here in the north.

A: Okay, thanks very much for that Philip, and Banbridge, thank you very much for that.

That completes the first round of questions and before we get to the next round of questions, do any of the MLAs want to add in anything to that last response or anything? I know, Rosemary, you have to leave us.

R: Yes, thank you very much.

I just want to thank you all for participating this afternoon. It's really good to listen to you and see you. Can I wish you well with your studies and perhaps we will one day have part of our geography curriculum and our science curriculum dedicated to what we can do for climate change and looking at progressive ways in helping others achieve carbon neutral 100%.

A: Thank you, Rosemary. Thank you very much.

Okay, will we go and do another round of questions? Ulidia we'll come to you for your next question and maybe John Blair will take the lead on this question, please.

UIC: Sorry, I think we weren't loud enough, we weren't close enough to camera.

We're going to go straight to our last question if that's okay? Because that's the one that the kids really wanted the answer to and we're just a bit worried about time. So Hannah is going to come forward, come closer Hannah.

UIC: In what way does the Assembly think this gas project, which will take at least 8-10 years before it's ready to store gas, but will damage marine life, help Northern Ireland with the aims of COP26?

J: Yes, you're on about the gas caverns project at Islandmagee? Yes?

My colleague Stewart Dickson (MLA) and colleagues at council level and others, I should say from other parties, have made their views very clear on this. I registered my objection to that. I'm aware of the objection of many others. I can't speak for other Members of the Assembly and I can't speak for the Department generally. But what I can say to you is, that in my opinion, not proper consideration has been given to two things.

First of all, the level of objection from local people and local representatives. Secondly, and I make no apology for saying, more importantly, the potential damage to marine life. We live in a world where we're all sitting watching the Blue Planet. These matters for the right reasons have been given a higher profile than ever before, possibly in my lifetime. I welcome all of the conversations. I welcome the public attention to the matters, whether they're local or global. I think one of the very few positives of the Covid-19 period, is the increased attention being paid to and the appreciation of our natural environment and surroundings and the need to protect those and our natural habitat.

I therefore find it hard to square the circle of a Department/Government welcoming and trying to progress all of these things, whilst at the same time (inaudible) for something that could cause irreparable damage to an eco-system on our very own shoreline.

So, I hope that explains my position to you which is one of opposition an opposition that will continue and let's hope that we can reverse the current trend on that one.

A: John, thanks very much.

I wonder do any of the other MLAs want to come in on that given that it has an angle, a local angle, an angle on the gas storage project in Larne?

P: Just briefly, we had the opportunity of raising it with the Minister, when he last came to the Committee because he had just made that announcement and I had quizzed him specifically on it. I mean, I totally agree with the issue and the explanation given by John (Blair). So there is an awful lot of concern across all the parties and I suspect there'll be some collaboration among parties to try to ensure that there's a lot of scrutiny in place will regard to this particular project.

A: Okay, thanks very much Philip. And thanks for that excellent question also.

Okay. St Patrick's over to you and maybe Declan, you take a lead on this question, please.

SPC: With the increasing requirement for electric due to our need to reduce our fossil fuel use, how do you propose to ensure an increase in the use of renewable technologies?

D: You are talking about renewable technologies?

SPC: Yes.

D: Well, yeah, see in relation to the last question there, I made the point that for us to address our climate change commitments, it's absolutely crucial that we bring down the use of fossil fuels as well. And, we will again, we'll be participating with the Department for the Economy in terms of their new energy strategy that's coming out. We'll want to explore other options. For example, getting this much green energy, electric from the west into a newly enhanced grid. The hydrogen option, the methane is an option for injecting into the gas supply.

You know, we'll have to work with the likes of the Department of Economy as well, because there's going to have to be more investment in research and development, and I think it goes back to the question earlier. This, it's a no brainer that the likes of this should be on the curriculum. You know the need for climate change, the importance of it, how the world is heating up, the role that CO2 and other gases are playing here.

So, research and development, education, investing in the green technologies, hydrogen, making use of the methane, solar, wind energy. The hydrology example I gave you earlier for use of water and also, you know the planning as well. There's a big role here for the planners, councils and indeed the DFI, the Department of Infrastructure as well to facilitate or remove, make planning I suppose easier and more streamlined for green energy type projects as well.

So, that's some of things we can do and obviously at our own local level, we can do at our own individual level as well. But it's from a legislative point of view, a government point of view, these were some of the things that we certainly are looking at.

A: Okay, Declan, thanks very much for that one and St Patrick's thank you for that question, very topical.

And Banbridge, maybe we'll come to you now and maybe Patsy, you would take the lead on this question please?



BA: How will we pay for all of the measures that are suggested in the Bills and the measures that are needed to combat Global warming?

P: Well, I'll maybe put that one right back at you. We're paying already if we don't face up to the challenges of climate change. For example, who pays for all the damage that's being done through the fires in the United States and Australia, in the floods in Turkey and Germany that we saw there. If we don't address this problem, we will pay and pay more and continue to pay more. For example, how do people who will have to leave their homes permanently to go to other countries? How is that going to be paid for if this challenge isn't faced up to it?

So, what I would call it is, we're talking about paying for this. If we don't invest in the future, we ain't going to have a very pretty future for any of us. That's okay. We can sit back in this country and say, ahh, the weather's grand, it's not too bad, but whenever you stand in the middle of flash flooding in somebody's house, it's just abated but it had been a metre high. Whatever you look at other countries and the concern we need to have for other people and other communities. If we don't invest now, we're going to have not much of a planet left to be honest with you. So, I don't regard it as expenditure, I regard it as investment in the future. And an investment that is not only very worth while, but vital.

A: Okay, thanks very much, Patsy and thanks for that very excellent question on paying for it, very interesting.

J: Can I possibly come in Anne-Marie very briefly on that one to sort of tease it out a bit?

Of course, all government policy, all government implementation comes at a cost, there's no question about that. But there's always been, sort of in current terms, billions of pounds designated to both the public sector and private sector to research and technology, research, development and technology. So, there's budget there already, we need to switch the focus of that away from some current trends and previous trends to the new trend which would be more eco friendly and based on sustainability.

But at a very local level, we could, for example, look at things we're not doing right and this goes right back to how you pay for something. I frequently, and colleagues on the Committee will have heard me at this before. In my own area, in my South Antrim area, which is for the most part Antrim and Newtownabbey Council area. My constituents in Newtownabbey get their glass collected at their door. That glass is separated from the other waste, so it remains of good quality for recycling. Some of it, not all of it, but some of it, is taken to a plant near Toomebridge, also in my constituency. It goes through processes there and is turned back into glass in Derrylin in County Fermanagh as part of the process, also part of Rosemary's constituency. Those were both places that are really, really in need of those jobs.

If we create more of those jobs by doing something like making sure that my Antrim constituents who currently have to take their glass to a bottle bank, that's not good for the disabled, it's not good for anybody without a car, it's not good for older people who have given up their motor vehicles. I have examples of all of these people, my constituents, and they care about the environment.

If we do that better then it would be more glass to recycle, it will be good quality glass that's higher in value for the people doing the production of that. We will need more people to do it, we will meet more plants to do it. We will create more jobs in that green circular economy. Therefore, more people will pay taxes and that will contribute to the costs of the action

required for global warming. So circular economy is a big part of the equation on getting the processes such as recycling right also.

A: John, thanks very much for following up on that.

Okay, We've only got really five minutes left, so we'll try very hard to get one question each. Maybe we'll go back to you Ulidia for a question and maybe Philip you'd take the lead on this please?

UIC: What are your plans to increase green jobs in Northern Ireland?

P: Okay, well first and foremost I want to thank young people, we're talking about COP26 and we're talking about legislation, but one of the reasons why the climate emergency is so high up the agenda for politicians like ourselves, is because of the pressure applied by young people like yourselves. So you all deserve a round of applause for keeping our feet to the fire with regard to that. There's many young people all over the world have been demonstrating and highlighting this because essentially what we're talking about is your future.

That's essentially, if politicians don't get this right, it's going to have a severe impact on the lives that you can live and the lives that your children can live. But your lives are going to be totally different than mine growing up. The cars that you're going to drive are going to be different. They're going to be electric as opposed to petrol or diesel.

You know, whenever you get married or move out and build your own house, the way that house is going to be heated is totally different to the way I currently heat mine through oil and potentially coal. Your home will be heated through heat pumps and environmentally friendly practices. You know, what you eat may well change, there is undoubtedly going to be a change in how we produce our food. So, and the packaging and plastic. So the world that you're living in is going to have to change because it has to change if politicians get it right.

One of the things in terms of green jobs, you know, it is important that we have policies that do create green jobs, which is why we need firm legislation so that investors and investments in countries looking to come here to create jobs will have certainty. So we need to know, we need to send out the message that here in the north we want to assist people with green jobs because we want to do our bit for climate change.

My own constituency, for example, is North Antrim, Wright Bus is currently producing the hydrogen buses that Declan and others talked about. You know, that's green jobs. They're going to be producing a fleet of buses for Derry over the next years. So there are many ways which will allow green jobs.

But the majority of it is going to be done through private investment. So, you know, what legislators like ourselves do is, we create the framework that allows private investment and private companies to think that's a good place to invest and create wealth and create jobs.

One of the advantages that we now will have if we can get our climate legislation in place is for example, the protocol, you know, this part of the island is situated so that we can do business with our neighbours in Britain, but also within the EU. We will become a very, very attractive place for the creation of green jobs, if we can get this climate legislation in place and hopefully all of you will go on to third level education or leave school and engage in some form of education that you'll be leading the technological advances in the future.

A: Philip, thank you very much.

St. Patrick's we'll squeeze you in as quick as we can and Patsy, I would ask you to give a very brief answer to St Patrick's here please.

Sorry Patsy, I'll just hear their wee question. Thanks Ulidia for your question and St. Patrick's over to you. No problem.

SPC: Buildings are one of the largest sources of Greenhouse gas emissions, what are your plans to bring our building regulations in line with the net zero buildings, which has been adopted in many other regions.

P: Well, this is one of the things that offers us both a challenge and an opportunity, a challenge like, for example, the challenge we were talking about earlier about transport and electric vehicles. Not everybody can afford it and St. Patrick's you're not that far away from, removed from one of the biggest car dealers in the north. If you take a nip down there and see what price the electric vehicles are, you'll see that they're beyond the range of many people, so we can introduce standards for housing, we can introduce standards for transport, but in a situation where we have fuel poverty, which affects many people who can't heat their own homes in a situation where we have potentially, if we're asking people to switch over to electric vehicles, we could have motability poverty, especially for those of us like yourselves who live in the west and some of our more extended rural areas.

So I think there will have to be huge interventions by government to support and subsidise that 'Just Transition' to make sure that the people who are not on high incomes, the people for many for whom it's heat or eat. We've heard that phrase bandied about, to make sure that people are not disadvantaged and we move in this 'Just Transition' so, that 'Just Transition' with that government support, with that government intervention, number one it helps address climate change and say, for example, specifically in our houses. Number two, the standards that will hopefully be brought about with support from government will help create jobs, and that's where the likes of yourselves come in, in gaining skills to move into those sectors.

I have a young nephew who's currently doing his plumbing stuff and he's working away every day. But he's looking at the opportunities that this, if you like, green sector and the advancement of climate change legislation may present to him to work in and around houses and do the sort of stuff that you're just asking about. So, yes, we need financial support to do it, to act as an economic stimulus to create further jobs so it can be if done properly, a win win.

I'll just conclude by saying thanks very much everyone of you for attending today. It has been really challenging for us and it's very topical as we're moving through the legislative process of scrutiny every week, we do it on both climate change bills, so thank you for your time and input into that as well.

A: Thanks very much, Patsy.

And just as I squeeze in very quickly Banbridge, last question of the day and Declan maybe you finish on that one as well. Thanks Patsy.

BA: What has the Committee done as individuals to combat climate change or to reduce their carbon footprint?

D: Well, I suppose individually, a lot of our meetings are online, just like now, we're not all travelling up the road to Belfast and you're not travelling up the road to meet each other. That's something and I try to walk a bit more. And indeed Philip led by example there at the start of the week where he cycled to Glasgow to COP26 and cycled back home again, so he did.

I suppose, you know, it was difficult there during the Covid-19 thing there, but try to car share as much as possible and even there in my own townland here where we live just outside Omagh, Loughmacrory, just outside Omagh, you know, we would have a townland Whatsapp group so that all families aren't running up and down taking the Children to the football training at the same time. So we would kind of coordinate things like that you know.

Obviously, particularly during the Covid19 crisis we've been out a lot, we'd coordinated litter picks and took it part in them as well, you know. So reusing stuff a bit more as well, and of course, you know, less holidays as well, that was brought on by the Covid-19 crisis as well.

So, we do all of those individual things, I think, I see myself being even more conscious now, you know, in terms of using plastic bags and if I forget my plastic bags when I go shopping, which I frequently do, I'll usually just push the trolley to the boot of the car instead of taking new plastic bags, you know? So I think individually we all can do stuff.

I'm also involved up here in Loughmacrory which is a big lough which is part of our village and we do a lot of projects with the local school, a lot of ecological projects, and we do a lot of work with the NIEA and whenever my colleague John Blair here used to work for the Inland Fisheries, we did a lot of work up around the lake, which is part of our community association. We do a lot of joint working with the local school there and we've replanted trees and restocked the lake with fish and I do a lot of talks and stuff like that as well. So individually I know I could do more, but I do believe that the whole climate crisis and the things that we're experiencing has raised the consciousness, which is impacting on all of our individual behaviours.

J: Can I add Anne-Marie, just very quickly. One of the things I mentioned earlier about telling members of my own family to switch televisions off, I'm going to have to jump out here and go to another meeting anyway, but I think we're coming to a close.

One of the things we can do to ensure that everybody's carbon footprint is reduced, is keep up conversations like this because the more people are reminded of it, the more they think about it, the more action they will take. And as Philip paid tribute quite rightly earlier to the young people who have driven the conversation.

I would appeal that all of you do a number of things. Firstly, keep up the conversation because it leads to the pressure, leads to the actions. Secondly, keep at the politicians because we need the pressure as well. Thirdly, get involved yourselves, become the activist, become the politicians, you're doing it already. Those of us on this screen won't be around forever. Feel free to find out more from us about what it's like to do it. I would encourage any of you to come forward and do it if you're so inclined.

A: Thank you very much, John.

Thanks for all your questions. What a great question to end on Banbridge, thank you.

Sorry, for the rush at the end and Nick maybe I'll hand over to you, by way of doing a closure.

N: Thank you very much Anne-Marie and thank you very much indeed to all the three schools participating this afternoon. On behalf of the Committee, I know the members will have greatly appreciated the opportunity to hear your views and questions on climate change. It's such an important topic at the minute and I've really just been struck at how assertive and clued in you've all been with your very pointed and very challenging questions. It's great to see, certainly much more of a way with key issues than I was whenever I was doing politics back in my AS/A level days. So it's really been tremendous to have your participation here and it's something, certainly from a Committee perspective, where and when we can, we love to engage with young people in schools and your support is really, really appreciated.

So just thank you all very much indeed.

A: Okay everybody, so thank you very much Ulidia, St Patrick's, Banbridge, especially for coming and putting great questions and a big thanks to Patsy, to Philip, to John, to Declan and to Rosemary and to Nick. Thanks very much, everyone and tune in again and follow all the trials of the Bills at the Committee.

Thank you very much, everyone.

P: All the best, everybody.