# Quakers in Scotland: Submission to 2021 election manifestos

## Introduction

This paper is sent on behalf of [Quakers in Scotland](https://www.quakerscotland.org/). It is informed by the Quaker concern for equality and care for the earth, and by our current work on climate justice. Quakers seek to live in accordance with our core values of equality, peace, simplicity, sustainability, truth and integrity. Led by our experience that there is something of God in all people, we are saddened by, and deplore the vast inequalities that currently exist in Scottish and UK society as well as globally. We believe it is the duty of government to address the climate and inequality crises, and speak plainly and honestly about the scale of the economic transformation required, and about what this means for high-carbon industries such as oil and gas and aviation. We ask you to provide ethical leadership to build trust between government and citizens.

## Policy principles

Our faith leads us to support groups such as [Stop Climate Chaos Scotland](https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/) in their calls for action to tackle the economic, inequality and climate crises.

Tackling these crises must underpin all policy decisions. Public concern about climate change has reached a record high, and scores of leading global companies are calling for governments to use their [economic recovery plans](https://www.businessgreen.com/news/4014492/major-corporates-urge-eu-net-zero-heart-covid-19-recovery-plans)to support decarbonisation and long-term economic resilience.

We acknowledge that there are immediate problems to tackle across the board from education to housing, taxation to transport. Economic recovery is vital and will be on everyone’s minds, but we must do better than return to the previous economic situation. Policies to address economic recession can and must contribute to putting Scotland on the path to net-zero carbon by 2045 (and the interim 2030 target). More than that, they will put us on the path to a more sustainable, fairer society. This will require all Scottish government departments to work together to provide coherent reforms and regulation.

We would like to suggest **four policy principles** for your manifesto in relation to a just transition. We follow this with some specific policy asks.

1. Demonstrate that you plan urgent action to tackle the urgency already recognized by the declaration of a climate emergency. Every delay in getting to zero carbon means more suffering in Scotland and elsewhere. A just transition must be rapid, in line with what is necessary to keep warming below 1.5 degrees.
2. Poorer people in our society have been hit hardest by COVID-19 crisis, the recession, and climate impacts of air pollution. The rescue and recovery must prioritise improving the circumstances of the poor and vulnerable.
3. Policies should incentivise agroecological farming, sustainable land use and the circular economy and should be based on the “polluter pays” principle
4. Scotland, along with all developed nations has an obligation to support and fund poorer nations in slowing and adapting to climate change. Poorer nations are most affected by global heating and yet contributed least to the crisis. Policies to aid Scotland’s economic recovery and zero-carbon transition must not contribute to further damage and exploitation elsewhere in the world.

## Policy asks

We would like to suggest **six policies** that will help address **our priorities** and those of many other voters.

1. **Support people out of the recession:** by phasing out investment in fossil fuels and increase investment in environment- and nature-friendly industries. Ensure any COVID-19 financial rescue packages for companies are granted on strict conditions that put people and planet first.
2. **Tackle fuel poverty:** Make all homes energy efficient by 2030 and introduce a world-leading renewable electricity system, including local and district systems. This would also provide greater resilience in times of global crisis, and bring the benefits of public and community ownership.
3. **Create healthier and safer communities:** Invest in cycling and walking infrastructure and public transport, and bring forward the phasing-out of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2030.
4. **Maintain Scotland’s peatland as key to carbon capture:** Fulfil our major global responsibility in caring for our peatland, which is vital for carbon sequestration. We welcome the amount of tree planting that has taken place in Scotland but are concerned that this may be done at the expense of peatland – even shallow peat if tree planting incentives are wrongly applied.
5. **Address inequality created by land ownership in Scotland:** Introduce a land tax and further incentives to create community land ownership (urban and rural)
6. **Strengthen Scotland’s reputation for quality produce:** Post-Brexit regulations and support can ensure UK supply chains aren’t destroying the planet; provide greater opportunity for jobs in the rural economy; and guarantee that all food imports will meet the same legal environment, food safety and animal welfare standards as food that is produced in the EU.

**Questions:**

The climate emergency has not featured as a major election issue despite the fundamental threat it is already bringing to our societies. The Climate Change Committee’s recent report (25.06.20) recommends to each government department that it must “‘*Ahead of the CCC’s next adaptation progress report in 2021, demonstrate adaptation planning for a minimum 2°C and consideration of a 4°C global temperature rise (by 2100 from pre-industrial levels)”* Meeting this threat requires revolutionary change in our society, and our day-to-day way of life. We recognise that our elected representatives are faced with an enormous and complex task. There is no choice about it. The time for tweaking targets is over. We ask:

* Do you believe that action to meet the climate emergency is obligatory for our country’s future?
* Do you believe that the public is ready to accept the changes required?
* What is stopping you put the climate and ecological emergency centre stage, front page?
* What is stopping you put forward firm policy actions to start in 2021 (e.g. pilot district heating schemes and house-retro-fitting schemes)?
* How can we help you foster broad-based desire for change?
* Meeting the climate emergency will be a 25 year process through the life of 5 parliaments. How can you build cross party co-operation that will enable consistent climate policy to be maintained over this period?