**Hope Valley Climate Action – message to COP26**

The climate emergency is an existential crisis for human civilization. Rapid and dramatic cuts in greenhouse gas emissions are essential if global heating is to be restricted to 1.5 0C above pre-industrial levels, the aim of the Paris agreement. Net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 would not be enough to halt the irreversible and long-term impacts of the climate crisis, so it is essential to consider aiming to reach net zero sooner – by 2035 to 2040.

The COP26 to be held in Glasgow in November is of paramount importance. It is an opportunity, the last best opportunity, for countries to reach the necessary agreements on actions needed to mitigate climate change and the potentially catastrophic consequences that could ensue. As the host, Britain has a particular responsibility to make sure it succeeds.

Hope Valley Climate Action was established in 2019 to take local action and advocate for effective policies to mitigate climate change. Since then it has grown and developed, now having over 600 supporters and four part time staff.

HVCA held an open meeting on Monday 13th September, to learn more about the COP, discuss how we can and should respond locally, and determine what messages we wish to pass on to politicians at COP.

**Hope Valley Climate Action calls on the United Kingdom representatives at COP to:**

**Show bold and ambitious leadership.** The seriousness of the climate crisis cannot be overstated. A bold, imaginative and far-reaching response is essential, and as the host for the COP, the UK has a particular responsibility to lead other participants to reach ambitious agreements. Present and future generations will judge today’s leaders by the success of these talks. The UK must use all our diplomatic skills and influence to achieve this. A restoration of the cuts to the overseas aid budget would significantly help by enhancing our credibility and status worldwide.

**Determine scientifically based actions for all countries to take, set targets, and establish robust mechanisms for monitoring progress and holding countries to account.** The existing ‘Nationally Determined Contributions’ (NDCs) arising from the Paris agreement are estimated by the UN (2020 Emissions Gap Report) to lead to an increase in global average temperatures of *at least* 30C, and moreover depend on extensive use of negative emission technologies (carbon capture and storage), which are as yet unproven. Clearly, substantially more ambitious approaches are needed in order to close the gap to 1.50C.

**Lead the way in contributing to the Global Climate Fund.** Climate finance must be urgently and significantly scaled up, and access improved for poor and vulnerable countries and communities. The UK’s commitment to provide 50% of its climate finance for adaptation must be maintained, and other countries should be called on to do the same. Finance must be made available that is responsive to the needs of women, children, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups. The UK must also facilitate a constructive process to address past loss and damage, recognizing our historical responsibility for a large proportion of GHG emissions over the last two centuries. All financial support for fossil fuel extraction and use must cease, both at home and overseas.

**Lead by example.** UK leadership and credibility rests on taking the necessary actions for us to reach net zero as soon as possible. This must involve developing policies and providing the necessary resources to make housing and transport net zero, protecting and restoring nature in the UK through an ambitious Environment Bill with binding targets, ceasing any further fossil fuel extraction, and the creation of jobs in the ‘green industries’ of the future.

Jeremy Wight

HVCA Chair, September 2021