



**South Yorkshire  
Climate  
Alliance**

## **SCA LOBBYING REVIEW 2021 – REPORT**

### **Report of the ‘third Tuesday’ review meeting held on 15 February 2022**

#### Did we lobby on too many fronts?

One response was ‘a single focus didn’t emerge, so we kept them all simmering – but perhaps at the expense of a ‘notable success’. Whilst true, this didn’t really capture the strong majority view which was that they were all valid issues that deserved attention.

The discussion focused more on recognising the nature of what we had undertaken, and how we can do things better. I would identify the main points as being:

- There was great value in assembling our asks/demands in a single document. We hadn’t had our full agenda articulated explicitly before, and this provided a greater sense of overall coherence and purpose. We shouldn’t think of it as a ‘2021 document’, but as something of value stretching into the medium term;
- We should recognise that some items were more short term/some longer term, that some might lay relatively dormant until external impetus gave us leverage, and that some simply needed to be kept simmering. It wasn’t that we were lobbying on too many fronts, but that we expected to make progress on too many fronts. Perhaps “follow the enthusiasm” would be a good mantra to adopt;
- Perhaps we should have had a concerted focus on further developing some of the topics. If a wider group had discussed the asks/demands with some of the specific topic groups, then that collective effort may have usefully teased out the longer/shorter term aspects, focused on delivering something tangible within our scope, added to the thinking on resource support, creativity, media coverage, etc. One specific challenge was whether we had lost sight of national issues, and inputs from a wider group might have helped in that regard, and
- No appetite was expressed forcing a focus on just one or two topics for SCA.

#### Did we lobby high enough?

The general feelings were that we did ok. We have had engagement with SCC and SYMCA, and we have on-going relationships with individuals like Douglas Johnson, Richard Sulley and Stephen Betts. We should maintain these, seek to deepen them and develop a list of other individuals we should be seeking to influence. (Specific point – we should build the Hope for the Future (HFTF) advice into our engagement plans).

Although the question posed related to going “high enough”, there were also comments on the need to engage more with the public. Given the size of the task, the need to do much more through social media was emphasised.

### Were we creative enough?

Whilst it was recognised that lobbying skills and creative skills are different, the general feeling was:

- we had occasionally delivered great creativity (the SYMCA song was quoted);
- individual groups in SCA had been more creative than SCA itself;
- creative and interactive events would be a much bigger draw for the public and politicians alike, and
- there were untapped resources from Can Do partners that were not being engaged (the Guild of St George was quoted), as well as from other named artists willing to support our cause.

### Did we bring in all the allies we could?

It was felt we should reach out better to faith groups, SY groups outside of Sheffield, Can Do partners and professional environmentalist (possibly working in larger organisations).

Other comments under this heading are reported in the final section.

### Did we use the media well enough?

There were strong congratulations for people who had made an impact on screen or through the quality and persistence of their letter writing to the print media (Lindy Stone, Chris Broome and Roy Morris were named specifically). Generally, it was felt that there was better coverage of the Climate and Nature Crisis in 2021, that useful connections had been made and that we should put forward trained and competent spokespersons to appear on TV and radio more often.

### Did we organise ourselves well enough?

Besides the comments reported above in the third bullet point of this report, the following were made:

- We could use our networking capacity more. We could write to every organisation on the SCA mailing list to ask them which of the 12 topic areas matched their interests, and how they would like to be involved;
- Do we need to think about developing a ‘recruitment stream’ to get new people involved? There is a danger that we are developing into a body which has a small number of activists who become expert and deeply involved in specific topic areas at the expense of developing the wider movement;
- Is there clarity for groups about what being a member of SCA (and its campaigning activities) means?
- Have we got the balance right between time spent coordinating things and time spent doing things?

## Bringing some threads together

There are many valuable insights in this report which merit attention in their own right. But there are also a few overarching ideas beyond those reported above which strike me as being central to how we organise ourselves:

- The topic teams should be a core organisational unit for SCA. They aren't "lobbying topic teams", or "outreach/Can Do topic teams", but SCA-wide topic teams that provide a common home for our topic-focussed knowledge, connections and activities. They should have recognised convenors, and should meet/organise as they see fit;
- The existing 12 topic headings are broadly ok, but a quick review would be timely. There has been some discussion of creating a health topic, for instance, and we need focal points for the four LA Action Plans (not just the SCC/Arup Plan);
- Our pattern of monthly meetings (specifically the 'third Tuesday' campaigning meetings) is attracting less attendees and may be getting stale. It would be more attractive to have a more varied offering – so, for instance, in each quarter we might have one meeting featuring an invited speaker (attractive to environmental professionals, for instance), one featuring more substantial discussions led by individual SCA topics teams (including the LA-focused topic teams), and one featuring what different member organisations are doing beyond their SCA contributions. The 'second Tuesday' coordination group could keep in touch with the various topic groups, set the monthly agendas and help with SCA's thinking on special events like the Big Green Week.

**Geoff Cox**

**26 February 2022**