

UK Extinction Rebellion Principles and Values

1. WE HAVE A SHARED VISION OF CHANGE

Our duty is to create a world fit for the next seven generations to live in.

Our hearts tell us a different world is possible. Our vision of change is sufficiently broad that it can contain a variety of opinions on how best to work towards that change:

Our world is in crisis. Life itself is under threat. Yet every crisis contains the possibility of transformation. Across the world, heralded by the young, people are waking up and coming together.

We hear history calling to us from the future. We catch glimpses of a new world of love, respect and regeneration, where we have restored the intricate web of all life. It's a future that's inside us all – located in the fierce love we carry for our children, in our urge to help a stranger in distress, in our wish to forgive, even when that seems too much to ask.

And so we rebel for this, calling in joy, creativity and beauty. We rise in the name of truth and withdraw our consent for ecocide, oppression and patriarchy. We rise up for a world where power is shared for regeneration, repair and reconciliation. We rise for love in its ultimate wisdom. Our vision stretches beyond our own lifespan, to a horizon dedicated to future generations and the restoration of our planet's integrity.

Together, our rebellion is the gift this world needs. We are XR and you are us.

2. WE SET OUR MISSION ON WHAT IS NECESSARY

The change needed is huge and yet achievable. No regime in the 20th century managed to stand against an uprising which had the active participation of up to 3.5% of the population. In the UK, this would mean mobilising around 2 million people in order to oversee a rapid change in wealth distribution and power structures, preventing a rich elite from perpetuating a self-serving ideology.

We acknowledge that we are in the midst of a massive crisis, one which can be hard to comprehend and cope with. We are experiencing the 6th mass species extinction and we are not taking adequate steps to avert our civilisation from the most horrendous trajectory of climate change. The world is deeply unequal, with wealth and power levers concentrated in a small minority. We have crises in our mental and physical health, including our children, based in different forms of malnutrition and an increasingly toxic environment. We live with the threat of pandemics alongside antibiotic failure. Our financial system is destined for another crisis bigger

than the last. There is a global culture of conquering “others”, of competition, of revenge and of terrorism.

We recognise that our job may be less about “saving the world” and more about trying to develop our resilience as multiple collapses take place. We are based in the UK and we love this part of the world deeply. We are focussed on significant change here towards:

A functioning democracy, where people have real agency in decision making. This would include devolution of power to the level closest to people and communities, with structures to facilitate decision making locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, where appropriate. An economy designed to maximise well-being for all people and minimise harm to each other, our fellow creatures and our home planet. We need policies and laws that achieve greater equality, localised production, reduced consumption, zero carbon emissions and zero waste. Creating a regenerative culture. We can begin doing that right now! (See 3. Below and interspersed throughout).

We can focus on symptoms of this toxic system, yet we also we take opportunities to point out that full system change is needed. We also focus on the pillars that keep the current neo-liberal system in place:

A debt- and interest-based, deregulated finance sector

A fake and decaying democracy

A media captured to the interests of exploitative rich people and corporations

3. WE NEED A REGENERATIVE CULTURE

A regenerative human culture is healthy, resilient and adaptable; it cares for the planet and it cares for life in the awareness that this is the most effective way to create a thriving future for all. Regenerative Culture means exploring deep connection and adaptive ways of embracing support. More than being a network of “activists”, we seek to explore ways of being and doing that support positive change. This can include ceremony and prayer (in ways that are neither dogmatic nor expected) as formats to find inspiration and court collaboration from things other than ourselves. We need to look towards indigenous communities still living and fighting for their lands, for models of how to reconnect with love for ourselves, our communities and the natural treasury of the planet.

Regenerative Culture includes a healthy focus on mutually supporting categories of:

self care - cultivating compassionate, courageous and resilient human beings, through the actions we take and towards whatever the future holds

people care - creating dynamic support networks, relearning how to live and work in connection to each other

community care - developing shared community responsibility, reaching out into our wider networks, in particular marginalised groups, exploring ways to support and strengthen connections, sharing risk and prosperity

Earth care - how we look after this beautiful planet that sustains all. With gratitude and grief, we acknowledge the significance of each being that is woven into life on Earth.

Regenerative Culture is about relationships. Our relationships with ourselves and personal histories, our relationships with the systems we challenge, our relationships with other individuals day to day, our relationships within our communities, and our relationship with the natural treasury of the world around us - these are completely interdependent. By understanding this interconnection of the web of life on Earth, we can learn and adapt to redeem our place within it.

4. WE OPENLY CHALLENGE OURSELVES AND THIS TOXIC SYSTEM

We have a duty to disobey this system which destroys life on earth and is deeply unjust. One element of that is challenging within ourselves the parts of the system we have internalised. Some of us will undertake open (“above ground”) actions that risk arrest and charges. Evidence suggests that such open civil disobedience and direct action are crucial for change. It isn't necessary or desired that everyone do this (we ask everyone to take time to be clear on their own circumstances, capacity, fears, and motivations here). Importantly, while Extinction Rebellion culture offers to support those of us willing to put ourselves at risk in this way - there are also many support roles that are essential and we aim to enable at least 3% of the population to actively participate. Our civil disobedience and direct actions are in full public light. Organisers accept the risks they are taking, and we have issued a “necessity statement” online as to why we believe our actions are justified.

However, we are not just about being out there and taking action. We must also resource all aspects of a Regenerative Culture and take time to reflect on whether what we are doing is effective. We might find it challenging to keep a focus on some aspects of this work, including self-care and looking after each other. There can be a pull to do the next thing, to be “active”, but this can lead to burn-out.

There is a value in us making changes in our own lives to reflect the changes needed, such as changing our diets, where we go on holiday and so on (however personal responsibility can be overstated and is based, to some extent, in privilege). For all of these challenges we ask for room, patience and willingness to try new things to see if they support our goals.

5. WE VALUE REFLECTING AND LEARNING

We don't know how things will change so we are willing to experiment and learn from what we do. Through ongoing questioning, reflection and dialogue about what has worked and what has not we will improve what we do and not get stuck in repetitive behaviour. This is an active and ongoing process, requiring time and input for individuals and groups to think about what has gone well and why, what would be better to be done differently. Such reflective feedback can often look like conflict and will take a robust and resilient restorative system to turn it into learning for the whole community.

6. WE WELCOME EVERYONE AND EVERY PART OF EVERYONE

As a movement we are committed to campaigning for the right to life, and for the future life of our children and the planet. We recognise that in order to change the world, we must change the way we think about and form relationships with those we work and ally ourselves with. The world is currently defined by multiple hierarchies of race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. For those lower down these hierarchies, much of the world isn't a safe space. To create safer spaces we need to work actively to continuously build understandings of how these hierarchies operate, so that we can challenge them and build inclusion through making our spaces more accessible. Therefore, for our movement to aim for safety for everyone, it needs to raise awareness of safety for the most marginalised.

This principle includes a commitment to making safer spaces to support inclusivity. It is our goal that every individual is welcomed regardless of ethnicity, race, class, gender, gender identity, gender presentation, sexuality, age, income, ability, education, appearance, immigration status, belief or non-belief and activist experience. Every individual in the movement is responsible for creating and maintaining safer, compassionate and welcoming spaces. New people to the movement need to be explicitly welcomed. A simple starting point is adherence to these core principles. Our on-going commitment to this principle includes decolonising our language and attitudes through training and regular, supported dialogue spaces where we can learn about each other's views and opinions on a wide range of topics, allowing for tension and conflicting lived experience to inform our collective wisdom.

Physical violence or the incitement of violence towards others is not accepted. Discriminatory behaviour, language or behaviour that exhibits racial domination, sexism, anti-semitism, islamophobia, homophobia, ableism, class discrimination, prejudice around age and all other forms of oppression including abusive language towards others, either during an action or elsewhere, is not accepted whether physically or online.

We also recognise that we are complex beings and exhibit many different parts of ourselves at different times and in different circumstances. For example, sometimes we might be caring, at other times judgemental, and at other times carelessly reactive. Some of those parts are parts of us that we're happy to bring, and some of those parts are parts that we're struggling with, or perhaps not even aware they existed until they revealed themselves. With this knowledge, we approach each other from a place of compassion, and encourage each other to increase our own self-awareness

7. WE ACTIVELY MITIGATE POWER

The ground on which this network stands is on the relationships between its participants. We will work every day to build trust, respect and reciprocity among all of us. We assume all members to have good intentions and will react against disrespect. We use conflict resilience techniques to deal with conflict in a healthy way that will bring growth to our movement. We ground our

work in dialogue, healing, collective transformation and justice. We won't tolerate shaming of each other or bullying in any form. This requires us to be honest and clear with ourselves and each other; we all hold prejudices and biases, and these must be acknowledged rather than dwelled upon negatively. It is everyone's responsibility to change destructive habits and behaviours.

We recognise that our world as it stands is currently structured by various intersecting hierarchies based on class, race, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability and so on. As such, each person's experience is shaped by their position within these various social hierarchies. For instance, being a black woman one encounters different forms of oppression to a white woman, because of how race and gender combine and compound to shape experiences.

Whilst we aim to live in a world where these hierarchies no longer exist, we cannot simply pretend that they don't within our own network. For this reason we aim to centre voices that are normally the most marginalised, by allowing space for them to speak and encouraging those who normally wouldn't, to take leaderful positions. This isn't about deciding 'who is the most oppressed', it's about consciously making space for the people who have to fight the most to be heard, recognised and respected.

In practical terms this means:

We weight coordinating roles towards marginalised groups

Our media messaging includes issues and voices that are normally ignored (e.g. the link between climate change and immigration detention centres). However we are mindful of not trying to speak on someone else's behalf.

Accessibility is important (in terms of child care, wheelchair access, not speaking in technical jargon), both for meetings and actions

We recognise that oppressive behaviours are socially embedded within us, and privileged people are asked to commit to questioning their privilege and to be open to being challenged

We refresh those who hold positions of responsibility so that power doesn't get entrenched

We embed anti-oppressive practice into our training materials

Our strategy is focussed on doing the work it takes to forge genuine alliances with the grass roots movements of the people who are most marginalised.

We also recognise that sometimes people make mistakes, misjudgements and missteps, and we seek to avoid humiliating exposure when it is clear that an issue needs to be raised and dealt with.

Having a database, social media and a website; fundraising for meetings, etc, means that there is inevitably a centralisation of some power. To mitigate any power issues that can arise we have a Holding Group (see A1 below), whose role is transparent and into which there is a process for people to rotate in and out.

Thinking about these questions is encouraged: If you always do a role, is it possible to train someone else to do it? If someone else is taking leadership on a role, can you learn from them so that you can step in? Can you challenge yourself to take on a more upfront role if this is something you don't usually do? Do you take time to learn about power and privilege? Do you have an understanding of how the power and privilege you hold has an effect on other people and the movement you are part of?

8. WE AVOID BLAMING AND SHAMING

Blaming and shaming are not tools of Regenerative Culture.. Whilst a specific campaign may seek to highlight the damaging role played by an institution, including individuals serving that institution, our starting point is that we live in a toxic system that has damaged everybody. We can point out behaviour that is unhelpful, exploitative or abusive, and we won't tolerate such behaviour, and still we don't relinquish our love or power by blaming and shaming. This is also true in our interpersonal and group dynamics as well as our relationship to ourselves. We embrace change that creates unity in diversity; we need to set right the relationships between us, avoiding the interpersonal traps that come from games we may inadvertently play and bringing awareness to the structures that would divide us. We accept that emotion sometimes needs to be expressed, that a period of venting can be necessary. We ask each other for good grace in how we share overwhelming emotion and to return to a baseline of love, respect and mutual support. We are compassionate when mistakes are made. Mistakes are opportunities to learn. We look for ways to connect and understand. Listening deeply to each other is a powerful tool. We especially need to listen to those of us that come from groups whose voices tend to be silenced.

9. WE ARE A NONVIOLENT NETWORK

Nonviolence has been unequivocally shown to be an effective tool in mass mobilisations and so it is a cornerstone of our movement. Nonviolence keeps our movement alive. We use nonviolence to reveal systemic violence which people suffer from daily all over this world.. We will keep exposing violence through our nonviolent discipline regardless of who the perpetrators or their agents are.

We recognise that many people and movements in the world face death, displacement and abuse in defending food, land and welfare and recognise that it is often our privilege which keeps us safe. We intend to use our privilege acting in solidarity with all peoples, globally and in our own nation, who are marginalised and oppressed by injustice and violence.

We will not make judgements about the actions, strategies and methods of other organisations, movements and peoples acting either to protect themselves or in solidarity with others.

We will be respectful towards everyone - to each other, other members of the public and to the government and police. Whilst we intend to actively confront the system in ways that exert pressure for change, using methods such as civil disobedience, we will engage in no violence, physical or verbal, and carry no weapons. We aim to cultivate conditions which support

nonviolent discipline in all our actions, creating an atmosphere that fosters trust, beauty, inspiration, solemnity and dignity and honours our ancestral mentors and future generations. This nonviolent culture and discipline will best support the maintenance of a dynamic tension that employs the minimal confrontation necessary and yet avoids the passivity that allows ecological destruction to continue and injustice, apathy and oppression to triumph. We will adopt a dynamic nonviolent tension that reflects the magnitude of the emergency we seek to address.

We are calling for truth-telling in our demands and accordingly we hold ourselves accountable for our actions and will not hide from the consequences, including legal consequences. We will strive to be as open in our actions as possible, whilst enabling actions to be completed without being intercepted, Mindful of our own safety and protection we will carefully weigh who we can trust and we will strive ourselves to be trustworthy.

We do not claim to have The Answer or Solution to the injustices and violence we are confronting but rather seek and invite dialogue with everyone; a dialogue that enables understanding and out of which answers and solutions can arise. We aim for every stage of our actions, from planning through to consequences, to be a vehicle for dialogue, inviting others to engage and participate. In this we intend for our actions to pre-figure social justice and respect for ecological integrity, to be a healthy expression of a participatory democracy.

10. WE ARE BASED ON AUTONOMY AND DECENTRALISATION

We recognise that we can't look to government to solve the world's problems. It tends to concentrate power and wealth in the hands of a very privileged few, and often does not have the interests of the majority of people and the natural treasury of the planet at heart. We understand that we must self-organise to meet our own needs, which in the context of Extinction Rebellion means that we are working to equalise power by disrupting the usual pillars of power that govern our lives. In so doing, our intention is to create access to the resources we need, such as democratic structures that ensure everyone has a voice and an influence, information that comes without the bias of the rich and powerful, decent healthcare, education, social care and housing, clean energy production, and protections in law to prevent ecocide.

Any person or group can organise autonomously around the issues that feel most pressing for them, and take action in the name and spirit of Extinction Rebellion - so long as the action fits within Extinction Rebellion's Principles and Values. In this way, power is decentralised, meaning that there is no need to ask for permission from a central group or authority. We also promote the ideas of "holacracy" over consensus:

That it may be agreed in a group for one or two people to do a specific task for the group. Those people are then fully empowered to do the task.

They are best to seek advice and feedback but they don't need anyone's permission to complete the task.

They are fully responsible for outcomes and should reflect on them and how to make improvements for the future. If necessary, please help to “clean up”.

At the same time, as a network, Extinction Rebellion self-organises to provide for the needs of the people participating within it, working to provide training in strategic action for change, educating ourselves and each other around issues of power, privilege and how to decolonise, creating better accessibility, caring for our emotional needs in relation to working together, and making time for connection and fun.