

# XRUK 2025-26

# Strategy

Discover our roadmap for the journey ahead, to spark and sustain a spirit of creative, nonviolent rebellion.

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# The Snapshot

XR began with a promise, the pathway to which was laid out in our three demands - a mass movement capable of transformational, systemic change. This strategy is about going back to our roots, and leveraging everything we've learned to make that promise a reality.

Nearly six years on, and against all odds, Extinction Rebellion is still standing. Things have changed, because we changed them. We have changed, because things have changed around us. That is a demonstration of resilience and the power within us. But we are not just here to survive, we have a job to do.

The strength of the movement lies in its ability to build cultural momentum — the true lever for transformative change. True uprisings emerge from communities, rooted in trust, strong relationships, and collective, creative actions. Reflecting and learning on everything we have tried, and what it has taught us, has brought this into sharper focus.

Our job is to bring collective non-cooperation to that wider audience, creating a mass movement of empowerment and hope that **will not obey**.

This strategy will be achieved through building community bases of power, creating actions that deliver dilemmas and contention, reconnecting our creativity and NVDA and creating climate justice for each other.

Join us to discover our roadmap for the journey ahead, to spark and sustain a spirit of creative, nonviolent rebellion to disrupt and pressure the perpetrators of climate and ecological injustice and drive systemic change through equal participation in power.

**Together, rooted in love, we are all we need.**



# The Strategy

## XRUK Strategy for 2025-26

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## Executive Summary

Extinction Rebellion envisions a compassionate, inclusive and regenerative society, in which humanity thrives in harmony with the natural world. Our mission is to ignite and sustain nonviolent rebellion, to disrupt systems causing climate and ecological injustice – driving systemic change through collective empowerment and shared decision-making.

The primary focus of the movement in recent years has been on mass mobilisation and numbers, whereas in fact the lever for true, transformative change is cultural momentum. True uprisings come from communities, from foundations of relationships based on trust, and from collective non-cooperation.

Our job is to bring collective non-cooperation to a wider audience, creating a mass movement of empowerment and hope.

In this next phase of our journey we are not just rebelling against a system in crisis, we are building the power, resilience, and broad support necessary to create the sweeping changes envisioned by our original promise.

How we are going to do this:

- Building community bases of power
- Embracing contention and creativity in our actions
- Sowing the seeds of cultural momentum
- Speaking with our own voice and being proud to be Extinction Rebellion
- Climate justice work that is genuinely progressive
- Expanding our use of the tools of non-cooperation
- Building relationships with community footprints
- Nourishing and growing the agility and maturity of our systems
- Uniting as a movement to collectively decide what “Act Now” looks like in 2025

## Introduction

In what began as an audacious act of collective imagination, Extinction Rebellion transformed climate activism, reshaping the boundaries of what is possible. It was expected that if this movement did not achieve something enormous and win, then it would fail and disappear. In an act that seems rooted in the core of our DNA, we refused to obey. We are still here, and there's work to be done

The rise of this movement was no accident. It was the result of careful planning and intention, grounded in decades of hard-earned experience and laid out the groundwork for creating lasting change. Extinction Rebellion demonstrated that change emerges when people stand together, with courage, determination and ferocious love.

Nearly 6 years on from the Rebellion of April 2019, things have changed because we changed them and we have adapted because the world has changed around us. We know that our demand for net zero emissions by 2025 will not be met. The climate crisis continues to accelerate faster than predicted, transforming from future threat to present reality. We've had a massive impact, shifted public awareness and perceptions. Take a moment to think about what might have happened if we had not been here to act when and how we did. This year the systems resisting change have revealed both their strengths and their fatal flaws more than ever before. But we are stronger and wiser. Extinction Rebellion was built for precisely these moments.

Our **Three Demands**, to Tell the Truth, Act Now and Decide Together lead us toward the future we must create. Our path combines the urgency that sparked our founding with the wisdom gained through years of determined action. The future depends on what we do now. Rooted in love for the Earth and all that it sustains, here is our strategy for the next phase of the journey.

# Context

In 2018 Extinction Rebellion emerged into the public consciousness with an audacious vision to achieve systemic transformation through nonviolent civil disobedience. What began as a small grassroots movement was the catalyst for a seismic shift in the climate conversation. Years of work led to April 2019 - the Rebellion that would define us. For 11 days, our extraordinary pink boat stood defiant in Oxford Circus, while roadblocks, die-ins and a rebellious garden brought London's business as usual to a standstill. The scale of what we achieved brought home the urgency of the change that was needed in the UK as well as inspiring a movement that now spans the world. In the past 6 years, Extinction Rebellion brought people who didn't know how to be activists onto the streets, reinvigorated the passions of thousands who'd given up their own fights after decades and inspired yet more with the hope that something could change if they acted.

The landscape we navigate today is vastly different from those early days of seemingly exponential growth and dramatic actions. Tactics that have included elements of public disruption have held a crucial role as part of mainstreaming the climate debate, but continuing to disrupt a largely sympathetic public was no longer strategically effective, nor was it something we could muster sufficient numbers of people to do safely and effectively. "We Quit" was a reflection of the need for a shift in tactics, announced in a moment that generated a storm of media attention. The Public Order Act 2023 has fundamentally altered the terrain of protest, further criminalising many of our original tactics and raising the stakes for civil disobedience. The summer of 2024 brought a Labour government more amenable to climate action, a change that paradoxically complicates our mission. The perception of them as being more climate-friendly than the Conservatives may lead to complacency among the public, reducing the perceived need for grassroots activism and making it harder to mobilise widespread support for more ambitious and transformative climate policies.

Along with the external challenges, we continue to face internal ones. We grapple with ever-present financial instability and rebel burnout, while striving to maintain our revolutionary spirit. The stark reality that our demand for net zero by 2025 will go unmet forces us to confront difficult truths about the gap between raising awareness and achieving concrete change. Meanwhile many who are most at risk of the impacts of the climate emergency find themselves overwhelmed by immediate economic pressures, creating a complex tension between urgent environmental needs and daily survival.

Our original transformative vision remains. The tools we have built together have adapted to circumstance and have only grown more sophisticated with time. The obstacles we face have not dimmed our vision, they have sharpened it. Public trust in government's ability to tackle big problems has declined in recent years. We, and the growing reality of the climate crisis, have played a part in that. Our work on citizens' assemblies has evolved from a demand into a practical pathway towards democratic renewal. Our movement is a key piece in the bridge from the moderate to the radical, providing a pathway for individuals to transition from passive concern to active participation. We are building community bases of power, not just as a tactic, but as a necessary evolution in how movements such as this create lasting change.

Released in May 2023, [Here Comes Everyone](#), the previous movement strategy, identified a key precondition for success. This updated strategy builds on lessons learned from testing that approach, incorporating other essential ingredients that shape our work. It reflects the specific context of operating in the UK, the unique challenges posed by the climate and ecological emergency, and the distinct role of Extinction Rebellion UK in addressing them.

Extinction Rebellion UK must walk a complex line, maintaining our commitment to nonviolent civil disobedience while developing tactics that resonate with a changed world. We will build broader connections, rooted in love for our communities, fostering the organisational resilience needed for long-term struggle. As we enter this new phase we carry forward both the wisdom of our experiences and the urgency that sparked our founding actions - we are building the power and resilience to honour the promise we made, with the tools we have created along the way.

- **47%** of the public agree that **NVDA is necessary** to achieve social change
- **53%** believe social **change is driven more by people** than governments[6]

# Strategy Overview

## Vision and Mission

Extinction Rebellion is guided by a determination to achieve its three demands, while acting in alignment with our principles and values. Our vision represents the future ahead, the ultimate destination that guides the journey. Our mission is the strategic steps we must take in the present to bring us closer to that future.

### Vision

A society transformed to be compassionate, inclusive, regenerative, equitable and deeply connected, and in which the impacts of the climate and nature crises are mitigated and humanity thrives in harmony with the natural world.

### Mission

To spark and sustain a spirit of creative, nonviolent rebellion to disrupt and pressure the perpetrators of climate and ecological injustice and drive systemic change through equal participation in power.

## Theories of Change

Extinction Rebellion exists to drive genuine and radical change, and we can settle for nothing less. Guided by our Three Demands, Principles and Values. Nothing about that has changed.

The theories of change on which Extinction Rebellion was built were nuanced and sophisticated. In our urgency for action we lost sight of some aspects of them, and this work has not been held with

enough care over the past 6 years. Concepts of momentum-driven nonviolent direct action, mass mobilisation, a regenerative approach to mitigation and adaptation are interwoven throughout the movement's original Theory of Change to create Theories of Change. Together, these concepts provide the means for communities to **prevent further damage** and **prepare for already unavoidable changes**. Although the world and our movement has changed over the past 6 years, these original core principles continue to remain a valid framework for change and we now commit to the importance of refining, clarifying, and articulating our theories of change with greater care and precision than before.

We are finding out just how robust mature democracies powered by vast flows of money from a globalised financial system can be. NVDA and mass mobilisation alone do not create the power to leverage transformative change on the scale that is needed; they get limited and specific results, such as a declaration of a climate emergency without meaningful action and a net zero target that is inadequate. The climate movement needs to be able to show that cultural momentum is on our side, which in turn needs a broader spectrum of support than at present. If the only people supporting us are other people like us - activists and left-wing organisations, that is not enough to drive change on the scale that is necessary. Those in power find it too easy to define us as a group that can be dismissed, ignored and othered. **But if they cannot - if we were a little bit of everyone - that would give us power. That is when we would be impossible to ignore.**

We have learned, and so have others. We are not changing the destination set by our theories of change, we are becoming wiser about how to get there. As we continue our journey we are not just rebelling against a system in crisis, we are building the power, resilience and broad support necessary to create the sweeping changes envisioned by our theories of change.

Going forwards our theories of change are the map to realise the **promise** encapsulated from the start in our three demands - of Extinction Rebellion as a **mass movement to create transformational, systemic change**.

- XRUK remains committed to radical and genuine change, with NVDA as a vital tool for that work.
- The original theories of change still have potential but require better understanding, care, and testing to remain effective in a changing world.
- To become impossible to ignore, the movement must attract diverse support beyond traditional activist and left-wing groups.
- While mass mobilisation can achieve specific, limited results, that alone cannot drive the transformative system-wide change needed. Broader cultural momentum is key to creating lasting impact.

## 2025

As we prepare to meet the challenge of 2025, Extinction Rebellion must confront the truth. The demand we made for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 will not be met. We have lived through the first twelve month period to exceed 1.5°C globally. Governments have not acted so we will make the necessary change inevitable by doing it on the ground.

Extinction Rebellion played a part in raising public consciousness about the climate emergency to unprecedented levels. Awareness alone has proved insufficient against the determined resistance from a nominally democratic structure and the global financial systems that power it. These structures, built over centuries, have survived this long by being able to absorb, deflect and minimise radical ideas. With immediate costs of transition to net zero estimated at £60 billion per year in the UK, while climate impacts remain a deferred and expensive risk (around \$500Tr p/a worldwide by 2050). There is little incentive for short-termist governments to take urgent action.

The cascading crises of recent years have transformed the landscape our work takes place in. From pandemic recovery to inflation, housing insecurity and rising living costs, we know that many people (rebels included) feel overwhelmed and depleted. Even as people recognise the reality of climate breakdown, they find themselves trapped in a system that demands their complete attention simply to survive the present. Individual powerlessness against the power this system wields needs to be fought as hard as we used to fight climate denial.

The spirit of our demands, that the truth must be told, that targets are set based on physical reality and people are empowered to decide for themselves remains undiminished. There is opportunity in this moment to explore and define together what this means for us as a movement. We're still here, and we're not going anywhere.

2025 presents a pivotal moment to revisit and redefine our second demand. This moment offers a unique opportunity to set the direction for Extinction Rebellion UK over the next five years. As a movement, we have grown up - developing a mature strategy, sophisticated systems, and immense potential. Our Second Demand not being met is not an end but a continuation - a rise from the challenges we've faced, carrying forward the wisdom of our experiences and the clarity of renewed purpose. Together, rooted in love, we can embrace this transformation and chart the path forward.

The era of global warming has ended; The era of global boiling has arrived. The air is unbreathable. The heat is unbearable. And the level of fossil fuel profits and climate inaction is unacceptable.

~ António Guterres

## Detailed Strategy



# Love in Action

Bold and creative actions, rooted in courage and humour, are core elements of Extinction Rebellion. Where our actions have been their most powerful - and empowering - they have embodied the multiple strands of our theories of change, demonstrating the world we want to see even as we resist the current paradigm, through **waves of collective non-cooperation**.

Adapting actions to the changing landscape is a challenge, but one we should rise to. We can learn from movements that have come before us, but should never forget the unique challenge, and promise of Extinction Rebellion, in this moment. Here Comes Everyone spoke to an uncomfortable truth - that relying on a particular, narrow, set of tactics was having diminishing results. It takes courage to recognise that too often in moments of rebellion, people fall into patterns of what is familiar rather than what might be the most effective. We have consciously decided to break that cycle.

**Cultural momentum** is key to achieving the kind of change we want. Achieving that takes more than just getting attention. Our actions need to draw clear lines of connection between Extinction Rebellion, the CEE and unequal participation in power. We have, thus far, largely failed to act in ways that make this understandable to the wider public. It's not about finding a new approach but building on what already exists, doing it more boldly and effectively, and truly owning our impact. We can lower the barriers of participation and craft contention that is inviting and dilemmas that resonate. Rather than throwing ourselves at the pillars of power we can find the liminal spaces between them, as well as the weak spots that we can leverage.

Broadening the spectrum of support for our goals means we should also broaden **the spectrum of ways** in which people can meaningfully take part in NVDA, lowering barriers of engagement in actions and campaigns that are still rooted in our own purpose. Extinction Rebellion will seek to introduce **contention** and **dilemma** actions to a wider network, with a focus on modelling the power we can offer when we work together. Those dilemma actions and tactical frivolity show we're on the side of the people on the ground, and spark their imagination - **through beauty and humor and defiance**.

All rebels should aim to become a part of an active community of practice, seeking everyday acts of resistance. 'Always being in rebellion' need not mean we are constantly trying to get arrested, but rather **practise the skills of resistance** so as to maintain, improve and share them, building a sustainable and unpredictable rebellion. Not just on the streets of London, but everywhere. We should seek and share ways to disobey that can be woven into daily life, flexing and reinforcing our collective power.

As we take action we must avoid falling into traps of urgency, and make sure we make the most of our capacity. It is important to build towards change by seeking to craft genuine connections with other communities or movements with community footprints, not by opportunistically joining in during flashpoint moments. We must avoid simply adopting the agendas, ideologies and language of other groups. **We have our own story to tell.**

Our actions, and the stories they tell, must be rooted in our own identity. Actions that attract press are useful in sparking conversation and for creating awareness-raising opportunities and so we shall continue to purposely design high profile actions that are inviting and resonating, but with a critical element: unpredictability.

### **Key points**

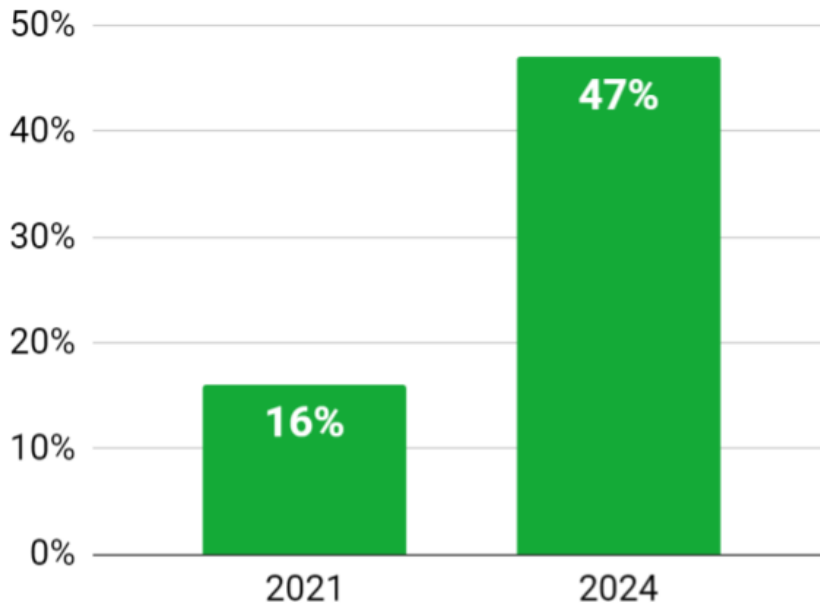
- Focusing on actions rooted in courage, humour and defiance that centre beauty and creativity.
- Acting to connect XRUK's mission to the CEE and systemic inequalities
- Prioritising connection and introducing the value of contention to ordinary people and climate concerns (flooding, food etc.)
- Inviting co-creation that enables people to step into equality with us, not for us
- Targeting weak spots in the system, and perpetrators of injustice
- Broadening the range of what is rebellious activity - do something naughty every day!

## **Tell Our Own Stories**

When we announced our arrival on the scene by dropping a massive banner off Westminster Bridge that said: CLIMATE CHANGE: WE'RE FUCKED our voice was one of the first things that caught public attention. At the beginning we were driven by emergency messaging that unapologetically sounded the alarm. We pulled no punches on what governments, institutions and corporations were doing their best to ignore. Since then outright denial has become untenable, and now we are challenged to be heard over greenwashing, conspiracy theorists and doomers. We have been uncompromising in our voice because we carry a truth based in physics, not politics, to those who want to try negotiating with the planet.

Our voice is one that is bold and unapologetic, balanced with irreverence and wit. Rooted in our Three Demands and our identity as a climate movement, we are well placed to forge links between the CEE and interconnected issues in a way that is consistent and authentic.

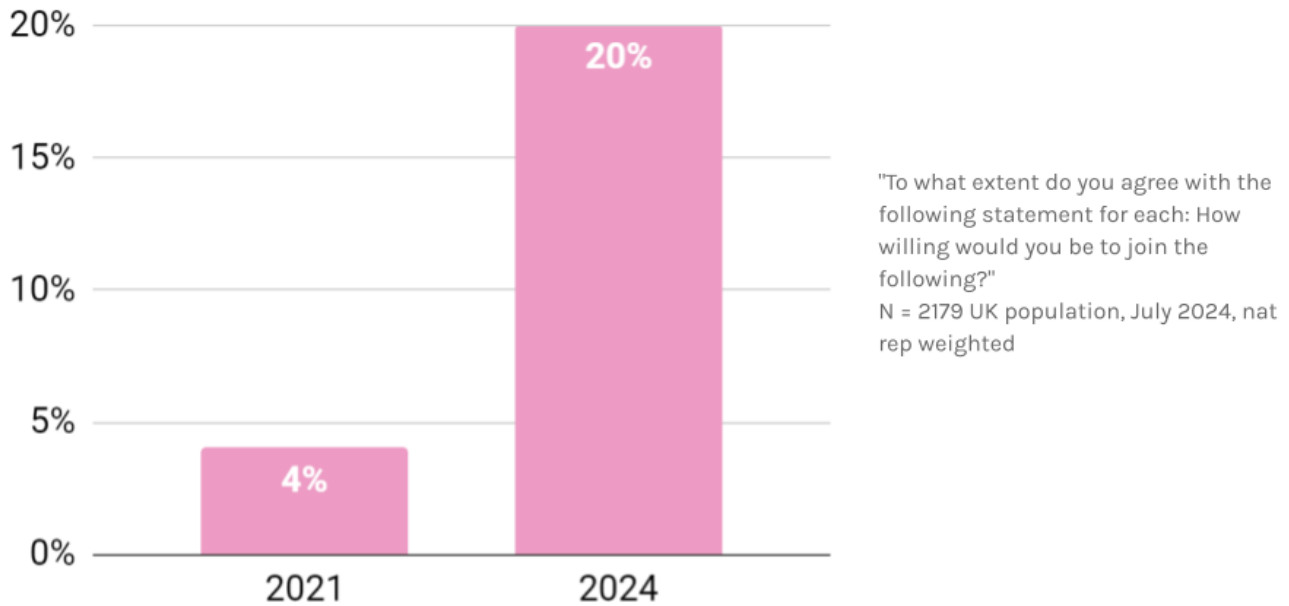
## XR - Familiarity



"How familiar are you with XR?" Top 2 box score, N = 1097 UK population 2021, "Below is a list of organisations that advocate for action on climate change in various ways. Which of the following groups have you heard of?" Extinction Rebellion selected  
N = 2179 UK population, July 2024, nat rep weighted

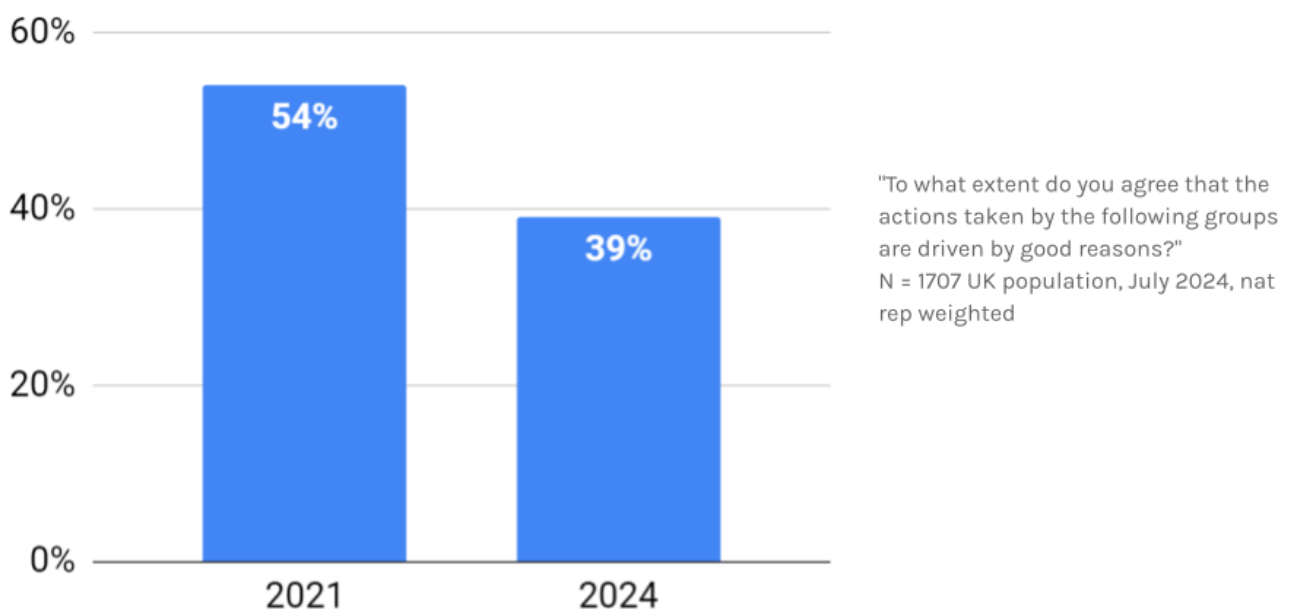
A research study was conducted for Extinction Rebellion for this iteration of the strategy which used the 2021 XRUK Barriers to Engagement by the Data Analysis and Insights Circle in order to form a comparison. This work shows increased engagement in climate and activism generally, with a growing inclination towards active involvement in climate-related causes, and a significant increase in awareness of and familiarity with Extinction Rebellion. However, broadening out beyond climate as a galvanising issue reinforces only the base of support from the activism world, while actively discouraging the wider public. It is essential to understand where the public is in terms of Extinction Rebellion, other climate groups and with nonviolent direct action more generally. This helps us understand how to leverage our messaging for maximum impact.

## XR - Willingness to Join



Extinction Rebellion is a broad church, holding a variety of beliefs and hopes. Sometimes this means that an inconsistent image has been presented to the world. This is reflected in the data: the public has a confused understanding of who we are and what we want, and correspondingly lower levels of trust and belief that as a movement we are driven by good motives. Research on successful social movements tells us coherence and alignment on strategy, tactical plans and messaging are necessary. Holding the organisational discipline to present a coherent image of ourselves to the public is vital if we want our story to be the one that is told.

## XR - Driven By Good Reasons



We know from our research that the public, generally, cannot identify Extinction Rebellion's goals (only 12% of respondents correctly attribute the mission statement from our principle and values to us). Shaping public perception requires not only presenting ourselves effectively but also addressing the influence of media coverage and the public's tendency to group all NVDA under a single banner, often failing to distinguish between distinct movements, a trap we fall into ourselves. Our mission is one that is not widely recognised or understood, coming from a movement that has often been fragmented and in conflict with itself - that is not a movement that wins.

The findings of the strategic comms research challenge preconceptions about who we already resonate with. From an ethnicity perspective, white people are the most knowledgeable about Extinction Rebellion - and the group least likely to support us. Contrastingly those identifying as Black, African or Caribbean are more strongly supportive of Extinction Rebellion and more strongly in favour of NVDA in general. We see from our research base that people who are systematically disenfranchised by the system see more value in rebellion. We know, particularly in the case of climate, that is a large and growing potential audience. However while Black, African, and Caribbean communities are more strongly in favor of NVDA, marginalisation and concerns about unfair treatment by police and courts may lead to personal reluctance to participate - highlighting an ongoing source of tension.

We need to find which slices of the non-activated public can be reached now, and which ones could be reached later with some groundwork. Our strategic communications research can give us insights into how to do this. Community work opens the doors into those spaces, giving us the ability to energise and engage people we've never spoken to before. This provides a key opportunity to reintroduce ourselves, on our own terms.

Our 2023-24 strategy highlighted a vital audience: **ordinary people, who don't identify with politics, and are not involved in campaigning.** The strategic communications project gives greater insight into this segment. They are generally indifferent to personal involvement in climate activism and political engagement. While they acknowledge the reality of climate change and believe it needs addressing, they don't feel a personal responsibility to take action, often leaving it to others to drive change. People who view themselves as politically neutral, they avoid active support for any causes, including climate action. Though not deeply informed or politically active, they do recognise that broader efforts to address climate change haven't gone far enough, even if they don't see resolving this gap as their personal responsibility. Further exploration on how to utilise these findings is key work for the months ahead.

Speaking with our own voice means we avoid the traps of ideology-based projects and campaigns and hold firm to our unique storytelling. We should find routes into messaging about interconnected issues in a way that brings a meaningful contribution, rooted in our own identity.

It is vital that as a movement we leverage the opportunities we have at this time. We should use the breadth of forms of media available to us, in a way that is consistent and powerful. Lack of awareness of who we are within key demographics affords the opportunity to reintroduce ourselves - not the media caricature, the real us. Ordinary people who are driven to extraordinary action by the crisis we face. Taking the image of us that is used to demoralise and deflect us and reframe it

as something that is a source of strength.

### Key points

- Speak with our own voice, and our own tone - punky, irreverent and authentic (with some humility!)
- Leading with the climate to find a way into interconnected issues
- Breaking into new audiences, and embracing the opportunity to reintroduce ourselves on our own terms

## Community Bases of Power

Community building is an essential part of creating social change. Communities are the space between governments and individuals where people come together to create change for themselves. Building strong communities that are able to do this cannot be avoided; it is how power is built regeneratively from the ground up and only works at the speed of trust.

Thriving communities actively disempower the institutions that are not serving them. Effective local community and citizens' assemblies bypass ineffective local authorities. Well-facilitated local meetings can amplify less-heard voices and organise around the skills, knowledge and experience that they already hold. Highly-targeted NVDA rooted in local knowledge and concerns can hold institutions to account where it matters most. Thriving communities can push against society's extractivist systems, they are regenerative. The actions they take are not just sustaining but generate energy, drive and trust to foster the development of a future that they want to live in.

Extinction Rebellion is a huge community and we are creating change for ourselves in ways that are meaningful to us. We are brilliant at building trust with rebels quickly in a way communities of place often struggle to do. People and purpose are key foundations of trust building - our actions are really important here. They are where we come together as a movement, share our knowledge and skills in person and create change. But they cannot happen without the foundations of community behind them.

“People who organised and engaged in community building in their neighbourhoods, towns and villages were the “cause” and the “I Have a Dream” speech was their “effect.””

~ Cormac Russell

This movement has created powerful groups of people who care deeply about the climate and each other. Groups that have each other's backs and support each other through some of the most stressful experiences activism can throw at them. We have created communities of care that turn out again and again and enable each other to act for the climate, our ecology and world. Our research shows we do this through at least thirteen processes of community building. These processes are co-created by every individual and not limited to roles. They are not a tick list and are never 'complete' but are ongoing in hundreds of tiny activities present in every encounter, meeting or action. Together we:

- Build trust
- Create and maintain connection
- Create safe space
- Build a shared sense of culture
- Create shared purpose
- Look to the boundaries of our groups and welcome people in
- Work out how to communicate meaningfully with each other
- Make collective and inclusive decisions
- Share skills and ideas
- Express ourselves creatively
- Celebrate and acknowledge the work we do and the wins we have
- Negotiate effectiveness in changing circumstances
- Look out for each others' well-being

We have an opportunity to strengthen these processes and turn them outwards to the world, embedding ourselves in the social fabric of our local places. Strengthening these processes and acknowledging the work that already goes on (often unrecognised) in the movement is imperative. A healthy XR community is a stronger community, where well-being is co-created for each other, where individuals stay longer, are supported by each other, take on roles that play to their strengths and take action regeneratively.

This is becoming increasingly important in the UK today. The cost of living crisis reduces individuals' time and energy to act on the things they care about, disconnecting us from each other and our power to create change. And when we dissent, the brokers of top-down power know how to shut it down. Government structures are more robust and resilient than we want to admit. But what they cannot manage is communities that have built genuine power together, who are making collective decisions to change things for themselves.

Building communities means embedding ourselves in our localities and investing in authentic connections with a broad range of people. These connections are built through curiosity and enquiry, to find and act on shared points of caring. It means bringing our NVDA skills into the cultural life of our places and allowing others to bring their skills too. We cannot do everything ourselves, nor do we need to. We do not need everyone to act with us but we do need everyone to act on the climate and ecological crisis in ways that matter to them. As assemblies often show, people taking collective action on issues they care about can be more radical than any action an institution would take.

By embedding ourselves in our localities we also begin the work of co-creating alternative structures and enacting climate justice for each other. Empowering communities disempowers institutions that are either not serving them or are actively suppressing them. As the impacts of the CEE intensify, fewer institutions are serving communities. The connections of a community are how it builds resilience to mitigate and respond to these impacts.

**“For the most vulnerable in a prolonged and intense heatwave, community connections, not access to services are a matter of life and death.”**

Luckily the research into community building in Extinction Rebellion shows we have already begun this work in hundreds of communities across the UK. This is an amazing foundation on which to build. However the research also shows that this work is often overlooked, uncelebrated and not shared as much as it could be. We have to shout about it and share the skills, knowledge and experience we already have across the movement.

Communities are where deep and just change becomes possible beyond our movement. Turning what could be shallow gestures, performative allyship or single moments of protest into the creation of bases of power. Our actions are lightning strikes but we need to build the storm of cultural momentum behind them. This storm lies in communities where people recognise and learn from each other's strengths, build trust, actively participate in collective decision making, stand up and create change in ways that matter to them.

### Key points

- Actions are lightning strikes; we have to build the storm
  - Keeping ourselves well enough to continue rebellion
  - Community building is a regenerative action
  - Operating on a human scale
  - Climate justice is something that communities create for each other.
  - Thriving communities actively disempower the institutions that are not serving them
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## Case study

As a case study XR Rhythms are one of the best examples of **how XR builds community**. It is not by any means the only example, any of the activities present here are also abundant in other parts of the movement. Bands build community in two ways: within themselves, and in how they act as part of local communities.

**Build trust** Trust is essential in a band, as no individual creates its sound alone. Trust develops through practice and time together. In action, drummers rely on trust to ensure safety for themselves and the public, stewards, whistlers, and shepherds manage external risks. This trust also extends to informed decisions around arrests. Bands have, without direction, encircled members targeted by police (due to age, sex, race, etc.) to help them leave safely. Bands are loud but being known as a considerate neighbours in local places builds up trust, negotiating practice



space and showing up of local causes that intersect with XR ones is key here.

**Create and maintain connection** Connection building begins on day one with every new drummer. All members help newcomers feel welcome, learn their part, follow signals, and adapt to the group's culture. Connections grow through regular practice, protests, and social time, strengthened by shared interests and purpose. In a local place connection is built broader by being visible in a space and owning elements of that local identity. This can be as simple as a name but also includes contributing to local festivals, elements of dress and customs in band culture.

**Create safe space** The Rhythms community is a diverse one (especially in age and neurotype) which prioritises safe spaces, particularly at camps. Safe space is continually shaped by listening and collective learning. An accessibility coordinator helps with planning and is on-call during camp. Accommodations include rooms for non-campers, quiet spaces, adjusted schedules, and adapted workshops for additional needs. Conflict is held by designated individuals, but all attendees are asked to share responsibility for creating a safe space. This attitude is present in local groups, creating environments that a broader range of people want to participate in.

**Share skills and ideas** In a band, skills sharing is power sharing. At their best, bands empower all members to play and whistle. This flexibility ensures members can switch roles seamlessly, making the band resilient and harder to disrupt on the street. Rhythms deliberately make a point of sharing skills freely, they have a cohesive and decentralised practice that can be picked up by anyone. In local places skill sharing is fun, bands run workshops for other groups. They also learn from others gaining techniques, inspiration, and connection in the process.

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## Together We Thrive

Extinction Rebellion must build genuine community power that reflects the full diversity of our society. Diasporic communities are not separate groups to be 'included' but integral parts of our society whose participation is essential in building the community bases of power needed to drive radical change. Bringing vital understanding of how collective power grows through sustained relationships and shared values, each generation can contribute different strengths to this power building. Faith groups, cultural institutions and regular acts of mutual support demonstrate how resilient community power develops when we genuinely work across the full spectrum of society.

The relationships maintained by diaspora communities naturally connect local action to global impact. Family ties and cultural bonds span borders, creating authentic pathways for understanding how change happens in different contexts. Their faith networks, cultural exchange and daily lived experience show us how global solidarity grows from real relationships and not simply from campaign moments and flashpoints. This matters profoundly for addressing the CEE, because climate breakdown affects communities everywhere, but its impacts fall heaviest on those who have done the least to cause it. This is obviously a commonly held view, but solidarity is a verb and it is incumbent on those in the UK to do better.

Overarching, transformation change on a worldwide level requires authentic global solidarity, not manufactured and transient moments of support. The networks maintained by diasporic

communities provide natural pathways for understanding how climate impacts affect different communities and what kinds of support make a difference. These connections embed justice at the heart of our response, linking local and global struggles for climate justice through real relationships. This is how we build a movement capable of driving the radical change needed to address a crisis that transcends all borders.

## Key points

- Look around you - Who are your neighbours? What are their experiences of the climate crisis? What is already being done in the UK?
- This is work that is going to look different across the movement, because the communities around us are different
- Extinction Rebellion being a part of authentic and genuine communities is a part of not only achieving cultural momentum but also being a part of real empowerment and change.

## Systems of Change

Extinction Rebellion has built sophisticated systems and cultures to enable our work, from digital platforms and legal support to facilitation services and regenerative ways of working. Guided by a mature self-organising system, these essential functions include strong media and messaging capabilities, outreach and onboarding processes, and comprehensive support for local groups. Together they create a foundation that allows the organism to operate effectively. This support infrastructure requires ongoing care to remain resilient and responsive to the needs of the movement.

Much has been done to evolve our systems and cultures but it is recognised that its various functions must work better together to reduce conflict and internal friction. While each circle and role was created to address real needs, the resulting complexity strains our resources and creates coordination challenges that have been difficult to address. The movement must embrace the agility and intention of our self-organising systems (SOS) in order to ensure that Extinction Rebellion UK can function in a way that ensures long-term effectiveness and sustainability. Use and understanding of our SOS has continued to improve across the organism. This has thrown into sharp relief instances where we have failed to use it and the harm caused to rebels and to our ability to succeed.

The movement needs to continue to invest in thoughtful systems to facilitate reflection and learning and assess effectiveness in order to understand how well different activities contribute to the goals we have set – celebrating what has been achieved as well as seeking out potential for improvement. Expanding in-house data practices will support better decision-making and resource allocation and empower more teams to work in an evidence based way, helping build the resilience we need to mobilise sustainably.

Financial sustainability underlies all these challenges. Long-overdue improvements are being made to our financial structure, but this is only one step on that journey. Extinction Rebellion has always had an oversized impact relative to our financial leverage. We must ensure we are balancing

fundraising capabilities that align with organisational needs and capacities with strategic spending decisions that look to ensure the ongoing health and sustainability of the movement. This is a marathon, not a sprint.

Harmonising structure, resources and collective will is a fundamental challenge the movement continues to struggle with. There are inherent tensions in a decentralised system, that the SOS was designed to address by providing a framework for autonomous decision making while maintaining strategic coherence. Where properly implemented and embraced, SOS has proven effective at reducing conflict, preventing burnout and enabling efficient collaboration. However some continue to view it as unnecessary bureaucracy that slows us rather than essential infrastructure which when used effectively allows us to be quick and agile. This often leads to lack of engagement or resistance that creates tension and is not aligned with the spirit of our SOS.

History shows that successful movements require organisational discipline in order to succeed, and in this SOS is fundamental to our work. The system offers vital tools for navigating complex organisational changes while maintaining distributed power and local autonomy. However, its effectiveness depends on genuine commitment from all parts of the movement.

In some cases, policies tailor-made to our unique circumstances may be appropriate. Creating a safe and regenerative culture is aided by having institutional rules in place for situations where a lack of alignment is leading to interpersonal conflict and blockages. We should explore the creation of transparent and objective processes that act to support rebels, ensure strategic alignment, and uphold the consent of the wider movement.

Addressing these interconnected challenges requires careful sequencing and clear communication. By thoughtfully streamlining structure and strengthening essential systems and support functions, Extinction Rebellion can create the organisational foundation needed for long-term success. This evolution will require engagement, compassion, and commitment from rebels throughout the organism, but will ultimately enable the movement to better serve its transformative mission.

## **Key points**

- Continue to improve understanding and use of SOS and explore the solutions it offers for recurring issues
- Explore how our data collection can be a resource for UK circles
- Empower Fundraising with the tools to win
- Re-evaluate what our long-term financial model looks like
- Strategic and tactical alignment is vital for success - we need to be pushing in the same direction

## **This is What Democracy Looks Like**

In observing policy-making processes we see legislators faced with competing interests, including media filtering, party point-scoring and electoral prospects, placating donors and big business, and even personal prospects for promotion. We do not witness a straightforward prioritisation of the national interest or common good. Even with the best intentions, parliamentarians are often unable

to set aside considerations that are unrelated to the actual issue at hand. This simple reality is no different for any UK government, whatever party is in charge.

There should be no incentives other than the common good in public policy-making. Policies should be made within a system that has removed or relegated the other incentives. However, without pressure for new ways of doing things, the public simply turns ever more towards alternative narratives, some of them extremist, xenophobic and filled with hate. This is not surprising, given how much emphasis is placed on the need to trust institutions, including those we can all personally see and experience as failing and delivering negative outcomes.

The need to champion an upgrade to our democracy is still not breaking through into the public consciousness, despite how obvious it is that it is urgently needed. Our Third Demand calls for a UK-wide Citizens' Assembly on Climate and Ecological Justice. We must root this demand within a wider purpose, understanding that on its own, such a citizens' assembly is not likely to deliver the scale of change necessary. It is a critical first step that would represent a true breakthrough, but one that would still be subject to the compromised processes within Westminster.

Extinction Rebellion should not advocate specific reforms, no matter how fashionable, since they will only amount to tweaks at the margins, not fundamental change. We will not advocate electoral system changes such as proportional representation, but rather focus on driving cultural impetus for systemic change. These represent more profound changes to the very fabric of how politics in the UK operate, highlighting the desperate need for more participatory and pluralistic processes and the recognition of poorly understood but powerful tools on offer and already working well, that in the right circumstances enable deliberation to be undertaken properly, not tokenistically.

Community building combined with assemblies and consent-based decision making can shift thinking from tweaking the status quo to being truly paradigm breaking. In order to do this we must hold space with the full breadth of any given community. We cannot just be talking to ourselves or like-minded participants – that is ineffective.

XRUK supports a vision of democracy as a practice that members of a community co-create with each other, where it represents agency and empowerment, not an unfamiliar system that is imposed from elsewhere and drawn on for support when required. Decision making should default to the level closest to people and communities. Tools like assemblies and advanced meeting facilitation techniques are critical to moving towards a culture of participation, fairness and transparency.

Extinction Rebellion recognises that beyond the CEE, there is a huge danger of feelings of disempowerment and distrust being widespread in the UK. Rather than be distracted by calls for specific, moderate changes that will do little to change this course, we must hold our nerve and insist that visionary change is not only the best antidote, it is already within our grasp. Far more important than individual reforms is the reinvigoration of trust and person-to-person connection.

## **Key points**

- Our Third Demand remains an essential part of the pathway for the movement
- The need to upgrade democracy is a powerful and unifying message

- Democracy is something we co-create and is a practice, not just a system.

## Another World is Possible Necessary

The path that bridges our present reality to a liveable future is one that we must build together, step by step, community by community. This bridge, The Bridge, serves as both a metaphor and practical infrastructure of transformation, built from the connections we forge, the trust we build and the power we create through collective action in communities.

On one side of the Bridge stands our current world, trapped in cycles of extraction and isolation, where profit dictates decisions and individuals struggle alone against mounting crises. On the other lies, not a utopia, but a future where communities have rediscovered their power to shape their own destiny. Between these points lies the crucial work of transition, a space where we develop the tools, relationships and regenerative cultural practices that make a different future possible.

The bridge manifests through practical actions: neighbours sharing resources during heatwaves; communities making decisions together about local needs; networks of support spanning different backgrounds and beliefs. People power becomes a solid plank in the bridge to a better future. The transformation grows from thousands of small shifts: from competition to cooperation, from extraction to regeneration, from isolation to connection. We build by starting where we are, using what we have, beginning with what is strong, engaging everyone who wants to help create something better. Each community that rediscovered its collective power illuminates the path forward.

We need to build this bridge because we see the crumbling infrastructure of our current systems, the mounting pressures of climate change, and the failure of centralised power to serve common needs. When communities develop their collective power, they create resilience for future crises while discovering their capacity to shape the present. Through networks of mutual support, we create new forms of abundance. By practising collective decision-making, we make better democracy real.

The future on our current trajectory holds more isolation, more extraction, more collapse – but we can choose a different path through the work of building power together. This is our invitation. Not to imagine a perfect future, but to join the vital work of building The Bridge that leads there. The future emerges through everyone who chooses to participate, who brings their skills, hopes and determination to this transformation. We do not need to see the whole path to take the next step, knowing that the future is built through what we choose to create together.

### Key points

- This is how we transition from our mission to our vision
- The breadth of the promise of our theories of change leads here

## Conclusion

This strategy reminds us what Extinction Rebellion is best at. It reinforces the need to reach the majority of people who want the same things as us, and that we already have the skills needed to do it. As we enter this pivotal year we will deepen our understanding of how to make our demands a reality in a world that acknowledges the crisis but remains locked in dangerous patterns of inadequate response. The work of holding decision makers accountable continues, strengthened by our deepened insight into the systemic barriers we must dismantle. 2025 marks a renewal of our commitment to the transformative change our world desperately needs.

Together, rooted in love, we are all we need.

Everything is on fire, but everyone I love is doing beautiful things and trying to make life worth living, And I know I don't have to believe in everything, but I believe in that.

~ Nikita Gill

## Appendices

### Glossary of Terms

Below are some of the key terms and concepts contained in this strategy that might benefit from

- **Wider Spectrum of Support** refers to the diversity and breadth of individuals, groups, and organisations, including those not previously aligned with the movement or its cause, who may actively endorse, participate in, or contribute to its goals.
- **Coalitions of Convenience** Often movements will work together to bring about one-off events or actions with the aim of raising awareness and applying pressure at necessary or opportune moments. Without ongoing in depth work on the issue at hand or to further a specific demand, however, these alliances become Coalitions of Convenience. Shows of unity across groups and mass numbers can help in maintaining media interest, but without committed work underlying them, along with Community Footprints, they risk becoming performative in nature, and are likely to have limited impact.
- **Spectrum of Activation** Not everyone reacts to the CEE the same way. Some people cycle to work a bit more, some go to prison, the reasons for those outcomes are manifold and complex. We need to understand that complexity better. Our work is to move people along the spectrum towards greater contention, but we lose millions of people focusing only on those prepared to break the law as they understand it. Activists have a terrible habit of assuming that if we can't see something on our own terms then it isn't

happening. “People don’t hit the streets over climate change because they don’t understand it” or “people unwilling to be arrested aren’t interested in seeing action”. This is untrue, it always was and holding onto it alienates the public in a way we can’t afford. We know that 80% of the UK public want to see more action on climate. We have support and goodwill, it’s out there. We need to interface with people, where they are, and encourage them to move along that spectrum towards greater contention, but in doing so, we cannot ignore the support we do have.

- **Community footprint** Few modern social movements are able to operate at both a national and local level. At the place based, local level, a community footprint means the individuals and activities are embedded in the life of the local community. This allows for building true, trust based relationships and also facilitates key feedback in real time from the grassroots to the national level. Community footprints are key to driving broad spectrum systemic change rather than narrowly defined policy changes.
- **Contention** refers to the deliberate use of confrontational or provocative actions to challenge systems, norms, or authorities, providing a framework to differentiate such tactics from non-confrontational actions that are safer and more accessible, without diminishing their value.
- **Cultural momentum** refers to the public and cultural conversation surrounding a movement's actions and underlying motivations, extending beyond mere support or approval to signify engagement with the issues being raised and their relevance to societal discourse.
- **Active community of practice** is a group of individuals who share a common interest or profession and actively engage in collective learning, knowledge-sharing, and skill development through ongoing collaboration, dialogue, and shared experiences.
- **Civil Disobedience** This is the intentional, nonviolent violation of laws or norms to protest against injustices or to bring attention to issues. It is often a moral or political act aimed at challenging unjust systems while respecting the broader principles of democracy and human rights.
- **Civil Resistance** The broader concept encompassing nonviolent actions taken to oppose oppression, advocate for rights, or achieve social, political, or economic change. It includes tactics like protests, strikes, boycotts, and non-cooperation, relying on collective power and strategic disruption rather than armed conflict.

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**With Love & Rage, XRUK Strategy Team**



# Strategaeth Gwrthryfel

## Difodiant y DU 2025-26

Dechreuodd XR gydag addewid, a gosodwyd y llwybr ato yn ein tri galwad - mudiad torfol sy'n gallu dod â newid trawsffurfiol, systemig. Mae'r strategaeth hon yn ymwneud â mynd yn ôl at ein gwreiddiau, a defnyddio popeth yr ydym wedi'i ddysgu i wireddu'r addewid hwnnw.

Bron i chwe blynedd yn ddiweddarach, ac yn groes i bob disgwyl, mae Gwrthryfel Difodiant ar ei draed o hyd. Mae pethau wedi newid, oherwydd fe wnaethon ni eu newid. Rydyn ni wedi newid, oherwydd mae pethau wedi newid o'n cwmpas. Mae hynny'n tystio i'r gwydnwch a'r pŵer sy ynom.

Mae prif ffocws y mudiad yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf wedi bod ar fwstro torfol a chodi niferoedd, ond mewn gwirionedd yr ysgogiad ar gyfer newid gwirioneddol, trawsnewidiol yw momentwm diwylliannol. Daw gwir wrthryfeloedd o gymunedau, o berthnasoedd sy'n seiliedig ar ymddiriedaeth, ac o anghydweithrediad creadigol ar y cyd.

Ein gwaith ni yw dod ag anghydweithrediad ar y cyd i'r gynulleidfa ehangach honno, gan greu mudiad torfol o rymuso a gobaith a fydd yn **gwrthod ufuddhau**.

Cyflawnir y strategaeth hon drwy adeiladu seiliau cymunedol o rym, creu penbleth a chynnen, ailgynnau ein hysbryd creadigol a chreu cyfiawnder hinsawdd i'n gilydd.

Ymunwch â ni i ddarganfod ein map ar gyfer y daith sydd o'n blaenau, i danio a chynnal ysbryd o wrthryfel creadigol, di-drais i darfu a rhoi pwysau ar y rhai sy'n cyflawni'r anghyfiawnder hinsawdd ac ecolegol fel y gallwn yrru newid systemig trwy gyfranogiad cyfartal mewn grym.

**Gyda'n gilydd, wedi'n gwreiddio mewn cariad, ni yw popeth sydd ei angen arnom.**

# The Strategy... But Shorter

## XRUK Strategy for 2025-26 - the Short Doc

[Click here for a PDF](#) version of the text below.

### Evolution to Revolution

In an audacious act of collective imagination, Extinction Rebellion transformed climate activism, reshaping the boundaries of what is possible. Since then the systems resisting change have revealed both their strengths and their fatal flaws more than ever before, and our strategy has grown and evolved, blossoming into something more powerful and focused.

We hold onto the power we felt standing on a bridge, flags waving in the wind, deep in the knowledge that the people around us have our back. We are acting together for a common purpose and belief in a better future.



### Vision and Mission

Our vision represents the future ahead, the ultimate destination that guides the journey. Our mission is the strategic steps we must take in the present to bring us closer to that future.

## Vision

A society transformed to be compassionate, inclusive, regenerative, equitable and deeply connected, and in which the impacts of the climate and nature crises are mitigated and humanity thrives in harmony with the natural world.

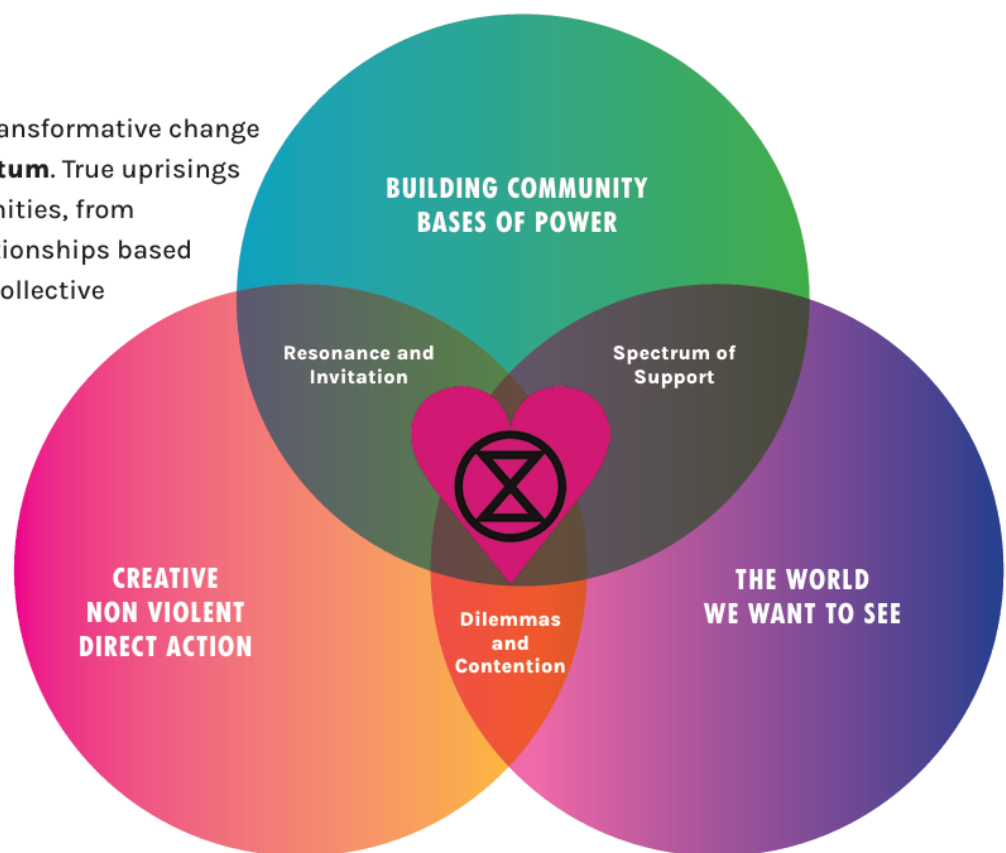
## Mission

To spark and sustain a spirit of creative, nonviolent rebellion to disrupt and pressure the perpetrators of climate and ecological injustice and drive systemic change through equal participation in power.

## Promise of Rebellion

Extinction Rebellion exists to drive genuine and radical change, and we can settle for nothing less. Since the beginning, our theories of change include all the ingredients to **prevent further damage** and **prepare for already unavoidable change**. We are not changing the destination set by our theories of change, we are becoming wiser about how to get there. XRUK remains committed to our original promise, **a mass movement to create transformational, systemic change**.

The lever for true, transformative change is **cultural momentum**. True uprisings come from communities, from foundations of relationships based on trust, and from collective non-cooperation.



# Love in Action

Nonviolent direct action is an essential ingredient for change. Bold creative actions, rooted in humour and courage, are core elements of Extinction Rebellion. Where our actions have been their most powerful - and empowering - they have embodied the multiple strands of our theories of change, demonstrating the world we want to see even as we resist the current paradigm, through waves of collective non-cooperation.

As we acknowledge our place within the ecology of movements, we recognise that XRUK is well placed to introduce contention and dilemma actions to a broader range of people. We can practice the skills of resistance everyday.

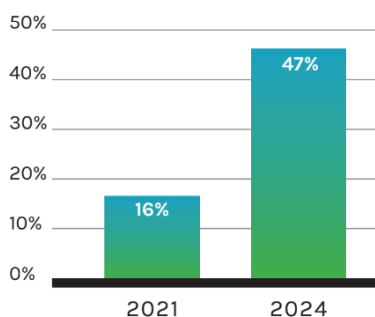
- Create actions rooted in creativity, humour and defiance
- Use a wider range of tactics, and share these skills
- Target weak spots in the system, and perpetrators of injustice
- Do something naughty every day!

## Tell Our Story

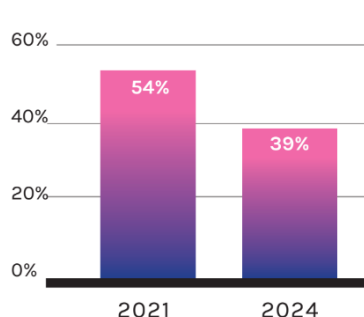
We are uncompromising in our voice because we carry a truth based in physics, not politics. XRUK is well placed to forge links between the climate and ecological emergency and interconnected issues in a way that is consistent and authentic. It is vital to reach a wider spectrum of support, and to use our messaging as a vehicle for that. Presenting a coherent image of ourselves to the public is vital if we want our story to be the one that is told.

XRUK conducted research to better understand public feeling toward Extinction Rebellion, nonviolent direct action, and other climate groups. The following results highlight key findings from the study.

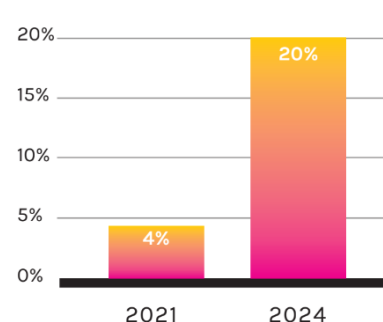
**XR FAMILIARITY**



**XR—DRIVEN BY GOOD REASONS**



**XR—WILLINGNESS TO JOIN**



# Community Bases of Power

Thriving communities actively disempower the institutions that are not serving them. This is real power. Building more stronger community connections is taking action, and one of our strongest tools in building community is our actions.

History notices lighting strikes in movements, but the work is continuous. Avoiding burnout for going the distance. Keeping ourselves well enough to continue rebellion.

- Community building is regenerative. Community is the scale at which people experience change and purpose.
- Justice is something that communities create for each other.
- XRUK has many examples of thriving communities to celebrate and learn from.
- Find the things that we love to do together, share and practice them!

## Together We Thrive

Diaspora communities already carry the lived experience of the climate and ecological emergency. Stories from family around the world maintain a deep connection to places that mean a lot to their communities. Systematically under- resourced communities are also very aware that “their” government does not even begin to serve them. Taking this opportunity to build two-way connections between our communities will help us all increase our collective resilience, and embed climate justice at the heart of our response.

- Look around you - Who are your neighbours? What are their experiences of the climate crisis? What is already being done in the UK?
- Justice is something that communities create for each other.
- Being a part of authentic and genuine communities is a part of not only achieving cultural momentum but also being a part of real empowerment and change.

## Systems of Change

Since 2018 we have cultivated and nurtured the largest self-organising system in the world. The infrastructure that powers our rebellion: our self-organising system (SOS), ways of working, financial systems, fundraising, data collection and mighty arts factory are vital parts of the work we do. This is the everyday work of bringing the world we want into being.

History shows that successful movements have one thing in common: organisational discipline. Our internal structures have improved a lot but in a living system there are always improvements to be made. We will make them, as ever, together.

- Strategic and tactical alignment within XRUK is vital for success.
- Draw on the strengths of our way of organising and explore the solutions it offers for recurring issues.

## This is What Democracy Looks Like

It is becoming abundantly clear to everyone that something is terribly wrong with our fractured and heating world. Equal participation in power presents a vital remedy. Our Third Demand, for a Citizens' Assembly on Climate and Ecological Justice is more relevant than ever.

To weave together a just new world, everyone needs to have agency in co-creating it.

- Our Third Demand remains an essential part of the pathway for the movement
- We do not get distracted by moderate changes within our current system, but remain focused on our ultimate destination
- Democracy is something we co-create and is a practice, not just a system.

## Another World is Possible Necessary

The path that bridges our present reality to a liveable future is one that we must build together, step by step, within and between our communities. The transformation grows from thousands of small shifts from competition to cooperation, from extraction to regeneration, from isolation to connection.

Each community that rediscovers its collective power illuminates the path forward, guided by the breadth of the promise of our theories of change. This is our invitation. To imagine a positive future, and to join in the vital work of building the bridge that leads there.

## This is the Work

This strategy highlights what Extinction Rebellion does best, using our existing skills to create change. As we enter a crucial year, we'll focus on turning our demands into reality, challenging a system that acknowledges the crisis but fails to act. Holding decision-makers accountable remains key, but with a clearer focus on how to use everything we have learned to break down the barriers for change. 2025 marks a renewal of our commitment to the transformative change our world desperately needs.

Together, rooted in love, we are all we need.





Contact: [strategy@extinctionrebellion.uk](mailto:strategy@extinctionrebellion.uk)

# FAQs

## **Q. What about NVDA?**

We are an NVDA movement! That is a part of the soul of the movement, and nothing has changed. This strategy is about doing more NVDA, in different, unpredictable and creative ways. The legal landscape has changed and our understanding of our tactics has grown. We should explore the diversity of direct action, get clever with our dilemmas, break down the soft/spicy binary and introduce contention to a wider audience.

## **Q. With 1.5° having been broken, and 2° probably to follow sooner rather than later the way things are going: How is the increased need for adaptation as well as mitigation reflected in the strategy?**

Adaptation has been seen as a dirty word in Extinction Rebellion. It's seen as an admission of defeat. Our theories of change have always held the ingredients to both prevent further damage and prepare for already unavoidable changes. It was built into us from the start. In a movement that has elements that sees Adaptation as moving away from NVDA, ask why? Why, in a world where climate change is forcing us to adapt right now, can't we focus our NVDA on demanding justice for those in need of that adaptation who are also being let down by the system?

We believe that the answer lies in communities, people experience damage and change at that scale. They understand the need to adapt to a changing environment better, if anything than the need to reduce the use of CO2. This human scale of understanding can be a bridge between us and those around us and allow us to embed authentically into our communities, by fighting for and introducing NVDA and non-cooperation as a tool they can use, to fight for changes they already see the need for.

## **Q. The strategy acknowledges that people are struggling to engage with environmental action because of immediate economic concerns.**

**A survey from Data Analysis and Insights quoted in the strategy suggests that people are less likely to engage with XR when we take actions that aren't purely climate-related.**

**Acknowledging that, does the Strategy Team think it makes sense to be more explicit in the links between economic inequality and ecocide, in order to change the idea of what "climate" is, and make the issue more relatable to day-to-day struggles? Or to refuse to acknowledge connections with other issues in an attempt to meet people where they are?**

The survey done by DAIC was from 2021, and we have a lot more data since then. It is important that we should find routes into messaging about interconnected issues in a way that brings a



meaningful contribution to the conversation, rooted in our own identity.

The strategic Comms research we did as part of this iteration found that the public has a confused understanding of who Extinction Rebellion are and what we want. This correlates with lower levels of trust and belief that as a movement we are driven by good motives. Establishing a clear narrative that forefronts climate as a way to step into other topics in a way that is authentic, genuine and empowering, not tokenistic, is vital.

It is important that we understand the importance of the language we use. Often we use words that, however correct, can feel like jargon, marking XR out as a club that they are not a part of. We hope that M&M especially embraces the potential for XR to be a leader in the conversation of connecting climate to the struggles and injustices faced by people in their daily lives, and be a source of hope and empowerment about how we can change that together.

**Q. A few years ago, Welsh independence movement YesCymru removed those it considered to be "leftists" so it could treat Welsh Independence as a politically neutral issue. YesCymru's membership and impact has since decreased substantially.**

**How can XRUK appeal to a wider spectrum of people without risking alienating those who do already support us? In XR Cymru, the movement is mostly operated by intersectional activists. How do we minimise the risk of losing them?**

This is the essence of building community bases of power. We talk to each other. We do things like sharing the strategy with others in language we understand ourselves. We create space for ongoing conversation, especially within regions and nations). We dedicate the time to making it clear what we are doing and why is so vital for avoiding the sort of misunderstandings that can leave people feeling disconnected and disempowered.

XR has always been a broad church, and intended to welcome everyone and every part of everyone. Not everyone has always felt at home in our spaces, and that is something we must all reflect on. We need to respect our differences and celebrate our shared purpose.

**Q. The promise of "We Quit" was to bring more moderate organisations to actions like The Big One, to show them the limits of moderate action, and to encourage them to join us in higher levels of resistance.**

**The legal environment has changed significantly over the past few years. But we, and other movements like JSO, DoJ, and the Palestine movement, have found ways round those limits, if not sometimes choosing to make the sacrifice of ignoring them altogether.**

**Few in XR advocate a return to public disruption in 2025. But have we given up on the idea of trying to harness the alliances we built to create any significantly large act of resistance at all? If so, when was that decision made?**

We have not given up on significantly large acts of resistance, but we know that this tactic was getting diminishing returns in terms of numbers on the street, and the change it was capable of

making. During the same time period, we've focused more on smaller single-issue actions, and achieved some tangible wins.

There are different approaches that are needed in order to be able to create acts of resistance at scale. One is practicing those skills of resistance within and alongside our communities. We mean practice. Practice reinforces the act and the better we can perform, the easier it is to offer those actions to others. Another approach involves coming together, as our own community, and bringing those skills we have honed together. Now we're well practiced we can start to get creative and inspired about what actions we can take, what they might look like.

While we have discussed at length what actions this form of strategy might lead to, it's not our mandate to generate them. We hope that Actions Circle will embrace the challenge of really scaling up what NVDA and resistance can look like in our changed climate. We know that there are already rebels out there doing this work and we would love to hear from them.

**Q. How does the strategy see a version of XR's Three Demands being met? And when?**

This strategy is focused on creating the conditions required in order to truly meet our Three Demands, drawing on all the learning of the last six years. The level of change we are demanding, compared to a single issue campaign requires a number of elements to truly turn the tide. We have looked at our strengths with what is necessary to win, and that is where we have identified the crucial piece of cultural momentum. Building up participation in civil disobedience, non cooperation and NVDA across entirely new segments of society, so that then we can face the system as power meeting power.

It's impossible to say when the demands will be met. The world is volatile at the moment, change is coming, and XR was designed to stand against the biggest most powerful system the world has known. However, we can say that these steps we take now will both build the world we want to see and create the power needed to disempower and destabilise the existing system.

**Q. How does the strategy take into account the international nature of our mission for climate justice? Especially considering the (at least perceived) imbalance between "climate ambitious" countries like the UK, and countries like the USA/Russia?**

Diaspora communities play a crucial role not only in achieving this but in doing so in a way that is meaningful, deeply rooted in identity and community. Climate justice has been a source of division, as it means different things to different people. However, if we can embrace these differences—understanding that different doesn't mean wrong - we can move beyond infighting and towards truly impactful work. Shifting from transactional solidarity to authentic justice work is a vital step forward on this path.

XRUK is renewing its ties with XR Global, gaining invaluable insights and fostering deeper connections with activists worldwide - their struggles, stories, and hopes.



Thank you for your questions. If there is anything else you would like to ask, or if you would like to continue the conversation, please don't hesitate to get in touch [strategy@extinctionrebellion.uk](mailto:strategy@extinctionrebellion.uk)

# Theories of Change

## Introduction

This page is part of the work done by the UK Strategy Team to inform the XRUK Strategy 2025-26.

Extinction Rebellion's theories of change are a complex topic, which has never been well enough explained or understood within the movement. It is important that this knowledge is shared widely.

The domain for the XRUK Theories of Change was delegated to the Strategy Team by the UK Rebel Hive in November 2023. At that time there was no agreed upon source of truth, and so the team went back to the earliest versions from 2018/19 and evaluated them through the lens of everything we have learned since.

## Strategy vs Theory of Change

*A strategy describes how to get there:* It's an overarching plan for coherent action that, when successful, brings about this change – it delivers the goods, so to speak.

*A Theory of Change explains why we think this will work:* As a theory, it describes how the social reality in which the movement is active presumably works, and which mechanisms can be used to change it.

In short, a theory of change is an integral part of a strategy, it is not something that is distinct or separate to it, It is a foundational part of that work.

## Where it Began

Extinction Rebellion began with Three Demands, but these demands hinted at a greater promise.

XR grew out of Rising Up! which had some catchy words for how it understood change would be created - subjectivism, voluntarism, theurgism and structuralism. Sexy. This model rose out of other work, including that by Micah White and the Occupy movement. In simplified terms, change happens when you have the four c's - consciousness, coordination, confrontation and consolidation. Confrontation in the form of civil disobedience is the ingredient that is the most likely to be missing.

The [Civil Resistance Model](#) is what many rebels understood to be our theories of change. Some people have not moved beyond this model (even as Roger himself explores [new ideas](#)).

It is easy to understand the appeal. 'Sit in the road until we win' is objectively easier to communicate, and a more compelling offer for people desperate for immediate change, at all costs.

But it was only ever based on *one strand* of our theories of change.

## What is a Theory of Change?

What is a theory of change? The term emerged in the 1990s as a new way to articulate the underlying strategic assumptions behind projects of social and political change. Widely used as a core campaign strategy and planning tool by activists and organisers, as well as NGOs, charities, and even business and professional bodies.

It is made up of the following:

- Desired Impact or Goal
- Preconditions
- Interventions or Activities
- Assumptions

For a system as complex as the one we are up against, and the level of change we are trying to bring about, our theories of change are equally complex to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts - in very simple terms, **how we win**.

## 2019

The last time our theory of change was a topic of intense interest was in 2019.

The Strategy Stewardship team did significant work on delving into and expanding the model into an overarching theory of change, that could contain multiple strands, in order to identify tipping points.

Meanwhile, other circles were producing their own theories of change, increasing the confusion of rebels in the movement.

Since 2019 the theory of change has barely featured in any of the XRUK or actions strategies. Do or Die in April 2021 alluded to the idea that not everyone believes in the mass protest and arrest theory but doesn't go into any greater depth.

## 2022

When the first permanent Strategy Team was formed in November 2021 they inherited a challenging landscape. They had to make a choice about what they could leverage to bring about the change promised in our demands.

The 2022 XRUK Strategy was an intentional double down on one strand of the original concept. Everything was thrown at mass mobilisation, to truly test it.

That strategy stated "This year Extinction Rebellion will reignite our original Theory of Change, mass mobilising towards 3.5% of the population."

This is important. It is vital to test theories.

And it didn't work.

## Here Comes Everyone

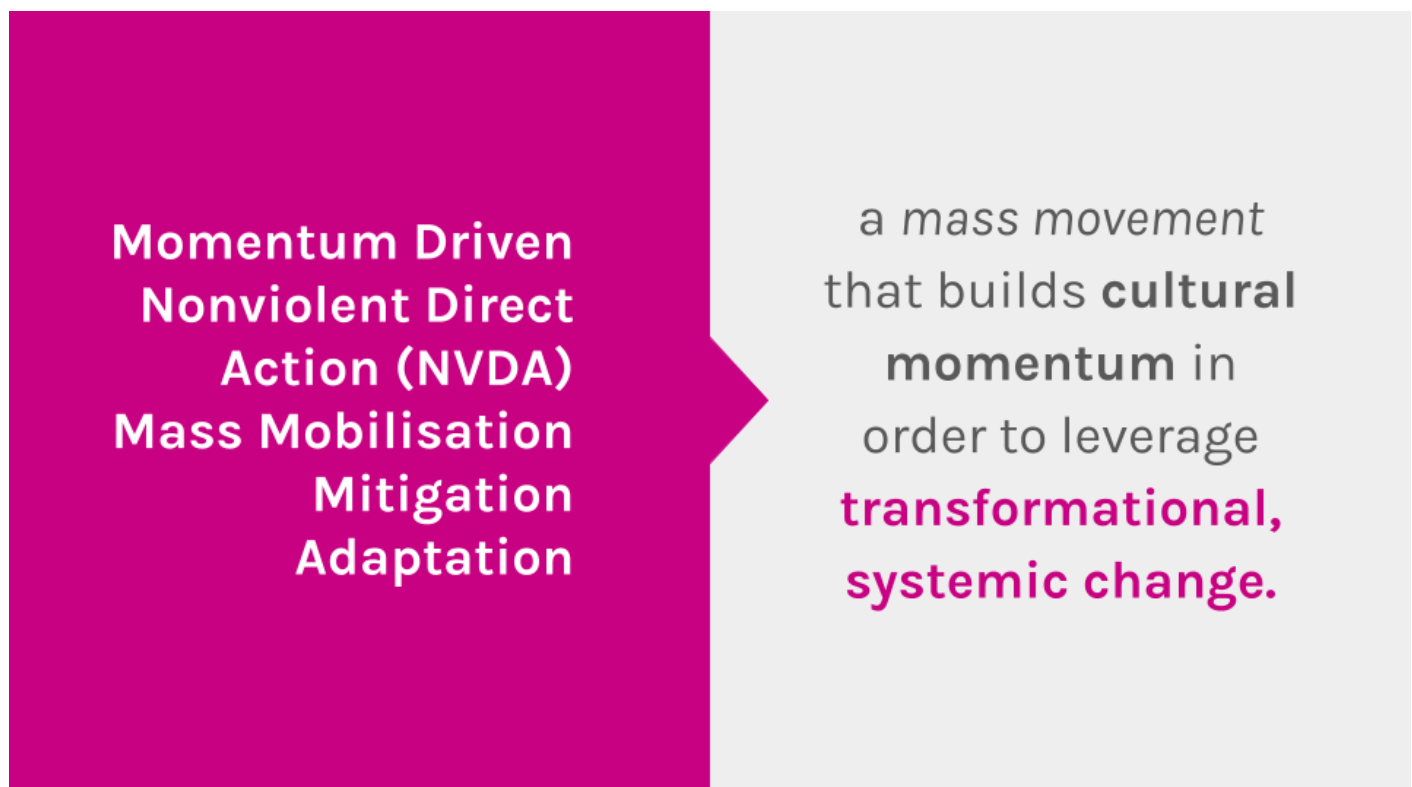
The next iteration of the Strategy Team began to explore in depth why this was, what was missing, and what we could do to create change.

The architects of Here Comes Everyone were a core group of rebels who had been rooted in the movement in different ways, since the start. They identified the ingredients of a wider spectrum of support and cultural momentum.

"We've identified that, catalysed by protest, change comes from cultural tipping points, a moment when it becomes clear to the powerful that cultural momentum is on our side. This means not just more people coming into resistance, but a wider variety of people."

This is the core change in the evolution of Extinction Rebellion, transition from the old paradigm to a new one.

## So what is our theory of change?



**Momentum Driven  
Nonviolent Direct  
Action (NVDA)  
Mass Mobilisation  
Mitigation  
Adaptation**

a mass movement  
that builds **cultural  
momentum** in  
order to leverage  
**transformational,  
systemic change.**

Momentum driven, nonviolent direct action mass mobilisation, mitigation and adaptation were the key ingredients in that original framework. They all remain an integral part of the DNA of XRUK. Creating the world we want to see through prefiguration and contention. Our understanding of some of them has changed over time, others we still have work to do. But each remains valid.

While we have worked, so have others- there is increasing research into social movements and how to succeed.

Our principles and values enshrine the need to reflect and learn, in order to keep moving forwards as a movement and not get stuck on a certain way of thinking.

One thing it is vital to remember, and must underpin all strategic thinking, is to start from where you are. The landscape we are in, the environment around us, the reality of our movement and the ecology of movements around us, and the climate and ecological emergency as a cause. Be inspired by work done in other parts of the world, focused on other issues, but through that context.

## But if we just get enough people, won't we win?

1.5 is dead and so is 3.5. Chenoweth has gone on the record and said that the 3.5 rule was never intended to apply to mature Western democracies.

Mass mobilisation may be effective for single issue campaigns, as it tends to achieve limited and specific results - the price to make you shut up and go away. We are seeking something more ambitious, on the path towards the ultimate prize - a mass movement that builds cultural momentum in order to leverage transformational, systemic change.



*The 3.5% participation metric may be useful as a rule of thumb in most cases; however, other factors - momentum, organization, strategic leadership, and sustainability - are likely as important as large-scale participation in achieving movement success and are often precursors to achieving 3.5% participation.*

Erica Chenoweth, [Questions, Answers, and Some Cautionary Updates Regarding the 3.5% Rule](#)

## What next?

The direction of our theories of change honours where they came from, and flexing them for a changed world. Instead of mass mobilisation, we seek to build a genuine mass movement. Rather than relying on momentum driven organising to drag people out onto the street under our banner, we will build cultural momentum, a genuine groundswell of support and empowerment that is a source of genuine empowerment and hope.

A theory is just that - a theory. We need to keep testing it, adjusting and adapting to bring about the change that is needed.

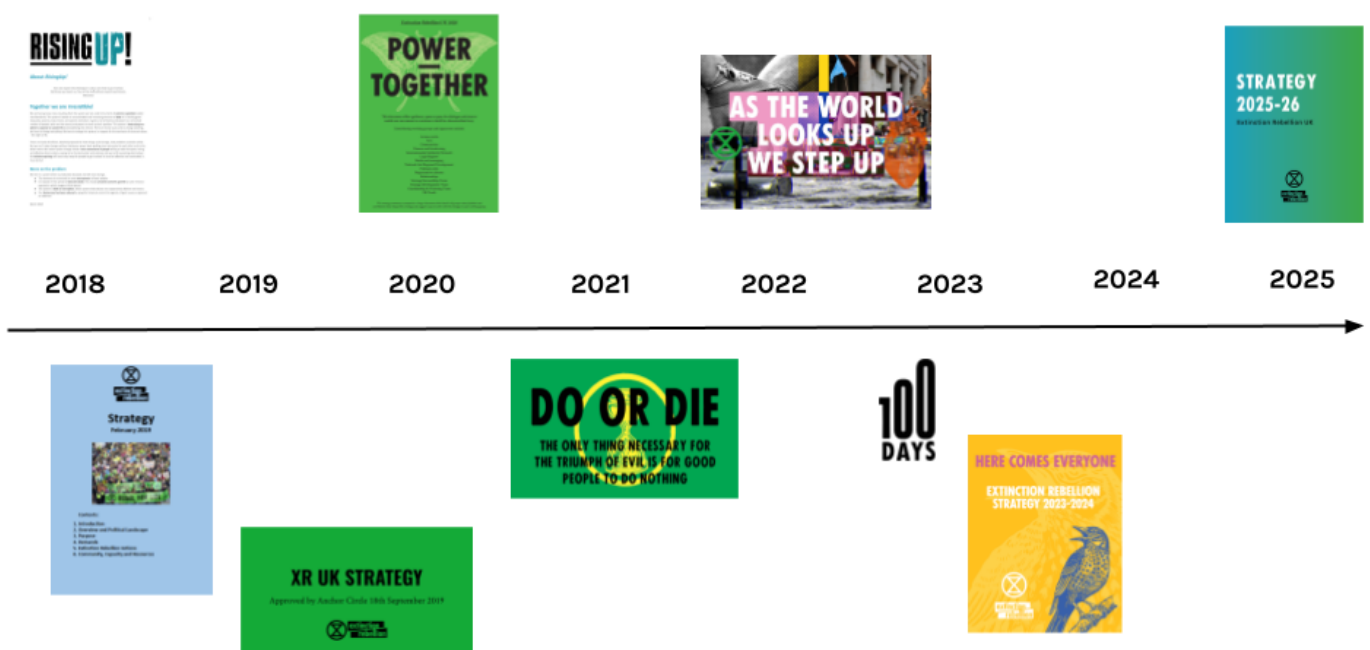
[Return to Strategy 25-26](#)



# History of XRUK Strategy

## #5 We value reflecting and learning

There has been significant learning and continuous improvement over time, consistently building on what came before. It's important not to lose sight of that progress. However, much of the knowledge and insights gained along the way haven't been widely known or shared. There's a clear need - and intention - to do better in sharing and communicating that information. It is part of our collective history, and we need to know what has come before in order to do better in the future.



## In the beginning

More than six years of reflecting and learning has led us to where we are now.

Extinction Rebellion grew out of Rising Up! which is where our principles and values and other parts of our DNA, such as our theories of change, came from. Although not a strategy, it is a foundational document.

In February 2019 the first thing calling itself a strategy for XR was released, which set out how XR would catalyse the next phase of the rebellion and beyond.

## Strategy and Stewardship Team

Following the April Rebellion, some of the co-founders wrote a strategy for the movement, and the movement did not accept this.

Which gave rise to the question: if the movement needed a strategy, who would design it and decide it?

A team called Strategy Stewardship was formed, which sat in the original Anchor Circle. Their job was not to create strategy but support the process for it.

The prevailing view at the time was that strategy should represent the collective views of the movement refined through tailored forms of convergent facilitation.

In practice, this process amounted to competing ideas for campaigns. It lacked any robust criteria to prove which would be most likely to achieve our aims.

There was no representation of the regions and nations, and no mechanism for ensuring all voices were heard.

## 2020 Strategy

The first UK strategy team was born!

This focused on creating a space for actual strategic analysis.

The worst and most difficult part was that they were expected to do all of the research, analysis, consultation and feedback of the movement and then filter all this information and put it all together, and write up the doc - in one month.

And then Covid and the XRUK Financial Crisis stopped play.

## Strategy Assembly

Next time around, the model leant more into the consultative side that had been missing, and the result was the Strategy Assembly.

An assembly was created from across the movement by the Strategy Stewardship team. In some ways it was a great experience, and brought a genuine diversity of views and lived experience, but the process was deeply flawed.

The research and analysis still had to be done by a team. A small team was elected by the assembly and then expected to analyse, synthesise and write up the doc.

The pressure on this team was enormous, the assembly felt shut out, and everyone fell out. Badly. It ended up being a deeply harmful experience for a number of people involved.

## 2022 Strategy

In November 2021 the Hive mandated the first permanent Strategy Team, as a subcircle.

There was an open election for IC, and the team began to feel the benefit of moving away from the pressure of a looming deadline.

The 2022 XRUK Strategy had the space to really look at the landscape we were in, the reality of the movement and do a depth of work that had not had the space before.

This process was smoother than ever before, but overly biased towards personal views about what we should be doing.

## Here Comes Everyone

This iteration really began to feel the benefits of being a permanent team. It had the space to ideate and explore in a way never given to a team before. Sitting in the Hive meant that there is ongoing input from the movement - updates and conversations from regions and nations EC provided consistent insights into the wider movement.

This team had a particular challenge, as it had to take the learnings from the 2022 Strategy and identify what it was that was missing from our strategy to inform the direction we are going. Doing the same thing again and hoping for different results was not an option. This team was made up of a mix of rebels, from co-founders to planners of some of our most defining actions.

However, the consultation element still wasn't right, and the learnings of this strategy were not embedded in the movement.

## Strategy 2025-26

This team was the first team that was able to truly build on the work that had come before in the most meaningful sense. Here Comes Everyone opened doors that allowed for a depth of work that no previous strategy process has been able to commit to.

One of the key pieces of research carried out during this iteration was into community building, and this research was rooted in consultation. However that was not widely enough known, and may have supported the idea that there was no consultation.

The key issue faced, outside of the perception of consultation, is that the strategic journey over the past few years has not been well enough communicated. This has led to a lot of misunderstandings, and it is vital that work is carried out this time or there is the risk of the same cycle repeating.

## Analysis and consultation

There are two core elements that XRUK continues to seek the right balance for.

There needs to be analysis, survey of literature and research. There also wants to be inputs from key stakeholders and experts, advice from friendly insiders - also, ideally advice from potentially not so friendly insiders.

Consultation is also necessary. It is important to understand the learnings, the strengths and weaknesses, issues like capacity, what works on the ground, and people's views. There is wisdom in what people say, even if there isn't a kind of formal methodology or process that will surface some kind of shiny, shiny golden data in terms of learnings.

Different strategy processes have emphasised different balances of the above, and sometimes run the risk of treating them as binary. It is vital that we embody reflection and learning and continue to develop and improve, rather than lose what we have already learned at moments of tension or discord.

Extinction Rebellion was created to bring about transformational, systemic change. That is not something that will be achieved if left to chance, or based on the view of the loudest voices, it needs to be approached with the appropriate level of thought and care that the work deserves.

## Next steps

There is clear work for the Strategy Team to do. As well as continuing to improve and refine the process, and seeking a more meaningful and accepted way of consultation, there is a lot of work to be done on sharing the work done by the team so that it is accessible to a wider audience. This page is one of those pieces of work.

## Further reading:

Here are links to the different strategies that have been produced by XRUK.

- [Rising Up!](#)
- [February 2019](#)
- [2019 Strategy - Strategy Stewardship](#)
- [Power Together](#)
- [Do or Die - Strategy Assembly](#)
- [2022 Strategy](#)
- [2023-24 Strategy - Here Comes Everyone](#)
- [2025-26 Strategy](#)

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# About the Strategy Team

Extinction Rebellion has long struggled with the question of how to do strategy for a decentralised movement. It has been approached in many different ways.

We have matured our thinking and our approach over this time, each iteration an improvement on what had come before.

Strategy is not just a matter of representing the views of the movement. We have needed a process that would tell us what is unique about us, what we have done, the skills we have and, given the landscape we were in, and who and what we were up against, how we can win. Two key components in creating a strategy are analysis and consultation - over the years we have got good at the analysis part, but creating space for meaningful consultation is an area that still requires work.

Since late 2021 XRUK has had a permanent Strategy Team that sits as a subcircle of the UK Rebel Hive. This has allowed ongoing improvements to be made through each Strategy cycle. Sitting in the Hive means that it is accountable to the elected representatives of the regions and nations, as well as other key circles like Operations and Systems and Cultures.

In December 2023 the Hive passed a new mandate for the Strategy Team, improving what came before - and what comes next will be another improvement as we've tested the process and found where it is strong and where it is not.

The changes were made to address four key areas: mitigation of power, transparency, consultation, comms.

It transformed the mandates of the internal and external coordinator, crafted mandates for all team members and created a range of policies to lay out the check and balances needed for a team with such an important job.

You can check these out [on the Organism](#).

Having used this process it is clear to see what worked well, and where there is room for improvement for the next iteration, as we reflect and learn. The current team is debriefing and collecting their experiences, and the rebels from the region and nations that sit in the Hive will decide what changes are needed.

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The XRUK Strategy Team is a diverse group of rebels, spanning various education levels, nationalities, ages, genders, ethnicities, and working backgrounds.

If you would like to get in touch with the Strategy Team you can contact them using [strategy@extinctionrebellion.uk](mailto:strategy@extinctionrebellion.uk)