

1 kg Wholemeal
£4.50
Carbon 0.95 kg

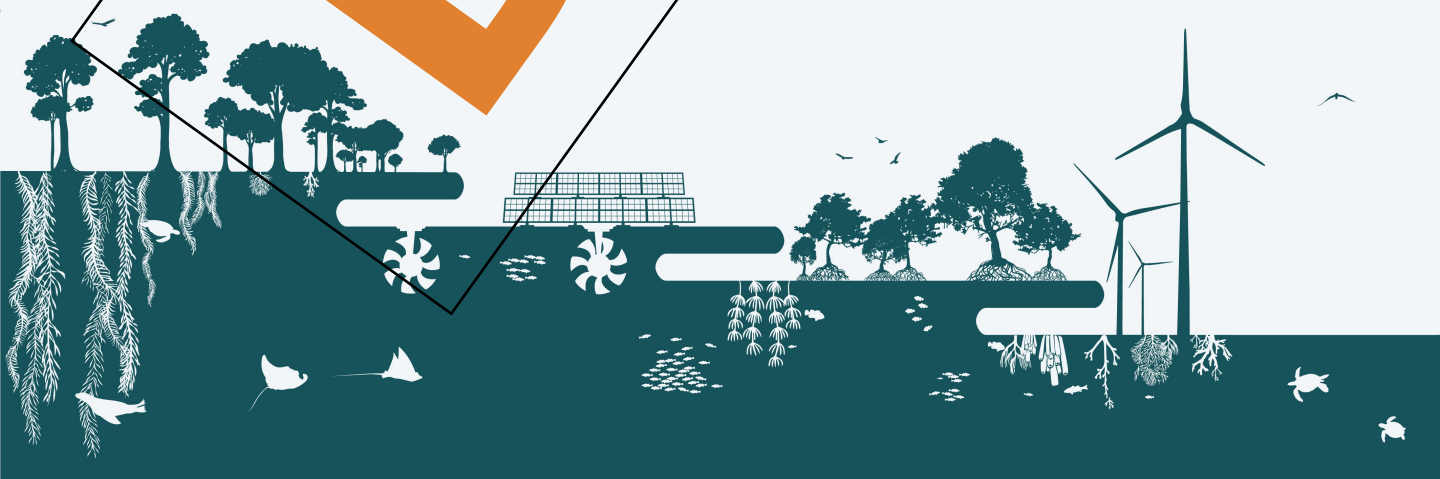


DRAFT

DON'T WAIT FOR THE CAVALRY

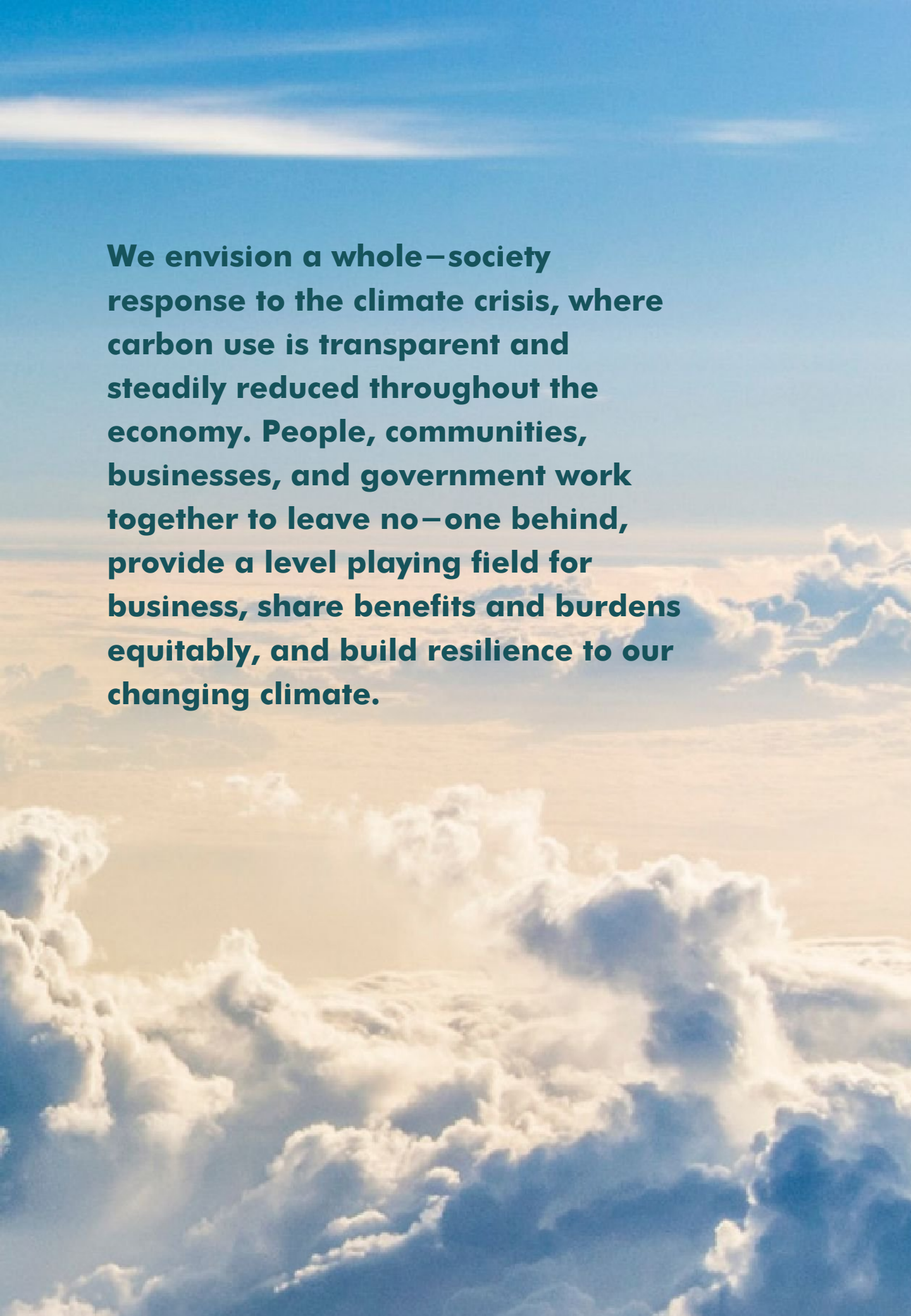
A NEW APPROACH TO A ZERO EMISSIONS FUTURE

A Radical Synthesis of Practical Social and Economic Changes to Reduce CO₂ Emissions



**For a world in control of
CO₂ emissions, via fair
social and economic
means, motivating and
supporting people and
businesses to reduce their
carbon footprints**





We envision a whole–society response to the climate crisis, where carbon use is transparent and steadily reduced throughout the economy. People, communities, businesses, and government work together to leave no–one behind, provide a level playing field for business, share benefits and burdens equitably, and build resilience to our changing climate.

The Mission

Our ultimate mission is to persuade people, business and government that together, we can take meaningful action using our Carbon Accounts framework.

We are already demonstrating how this would work on the ground in our grassroots climate action group, with the goal to inspire people and businesses and ultimately government to introduce this type of mechanism to reach science-based emission reduction targets on a national basis.

To achieve this, we have 3 core goals.

1. Trailblazing Change in North London with the EcoCounts Climate Action Group – piloting a group of citizens and businesses to show that living within a shared carbon budget is feasible, flexible and rewarding.
2. Reframing the Narrative – running a media campaign to tell a new story about tackling the climate crisis, engaging people, businesses and government.
3. Designing UK Climate Policy – developing and testing the policy concept through academic research, economic projections and simulations to ensure it is realistic, stable and effective.

Who We Are

We have established two organisations to deliver on these goals.



EcoCore is a [UK-registered CIC #13707292](#) addressing environmental challenges with pragmatism and evidence. We work with academics to develop actionable policy proposals, focusing on data, quantifiable measures and personal and organisational responsibility for emissions reduction. We create software tools to support accurate carbon tracking. By working with EcoCounts, we integrate grassroots experience into practical policy for a rapid transition from fossil fuels, bridging research, technology, and community action.

EcoCounts is a community-led charity, helping people measure and reduce their carbon footprints through personal carbon accounts, peer support and local partnerships. It collaborates with EcoCore and other organisations to trial carbon budgeting and group-level responsibility in real-world settings, generating evidence for fair, scalable, citizen-centred climate solutions. We are [registered with the UK Charities Commission \(#1196590\)](#).



Our Research Partners

EcoCore is partnering with Prof. Steve Keen and six UCL research students on an economic feasibility study, Introducing a Carbon Currency Policy, which models the macroeconomic behaviour of a national Carbon Accounts system. The research uses Ravel, a next-generation data analysis tool developed by Prof. Keen that replaces conventional spreadsheets with an auditable, flowchart-based approach to handling multidimensional data – enabling the team to simulate the interactions between carbon token flows, supply chains, fossil fuel production, and household budgets at a level of complexity and transparency that traditional modelling tools cannot match.

Read more on [our website](#).

Our Technology

We are developing a carbon footprint app and website carbon footprint dashboard for the EcoCounts group in collaboration with a UCL student development team, built on a secure, structured database with purpose-built front-end clients, replacing the manually maintained spreadsheets that supported our early data collection with a robust tech framework capable of scaling with the programme. Development is open source and volunteer-led, and we welcome contributions from technically skilled individuals and organisations who share our goals. Our web infrastructure is hosted by WebArchitects, a worker-owned co-operative providing low-carbon, sustainably managed hosting services.

Read more on [our website](#).

Who Has Supported Us

We are funded by the National Lottery, the Cripplegate Foundation, Groundworks Trust, the People's Postcode Lottery, Islington Council and a loyal and generous community of individual donors.



PART 1: THE PROBLEMS

CO₂ emissions are everybody's responsibility. But people don't know what CO₂ emissions they cause. Even if they wanted to find out, and most people don't, it's very difficult.

Some people in EcoCounts living in London and others elsewhere have reduced their emissions to a quarter of the national average.

Of course not everybody wants to do that, and there's the rub. In business, there are also issues. Government is in the worst position of all with challenges varying from the strength of the democratic mandate, across infrastructure and trade to weaknesses in the economic projections they use.

- Problem 1: Economic and Political Snafu
- Problem 2: Emissions Regulations Should Be For Edge Cases, Not The Core
- Problem 3: Carbon Taxes are Slow and Problematic
- Problem 4: the Carbon Markets Desperately Need a Substantial Upgrade
- Problem 5: the Triangle of Inertia
- Problem 6: the Fossil Fuel Industry Does Not Intend To Go Quietly

Problem 1: Economic and Political Snafu

Governments are still doubling down on fossil fuels. In the Global North political parties, economists and media outlets frequently advocate for minimal government and laissez-faire policies, ignoring the environment as an 'externality' and arguing that business and industry will voluntarily find a solution.

“We believe that bringing the world back on to a path compatible with respect for planetary boundaries (footnote/hint/info-tip: that delimit the conditions needed for humanity to thrive on Earth) is not possible in unaltered socio-economic conditions, and even optimistic scenarios require incisive and immediate action.”

–Professor Dr Johan Rockström et al, Potsdam Institut für Klima: [Planetary boundaries delimit the significant conditions needed for humanity to thrive on Earth](#). Second major planetary boundaries update (2023)

Many political and business leaders hugely underestimate the risks, just as they did before the Global Financial Crisis in 2008. For years, mainstream economists have struggled to recognise that sharp changes in climate will throw natural geological and biological cycles into chaos, predicting that 4°C of global warming will have a minimal impact on economic growth.^{[1] [2] [3] [4]}

Much of the world is only now discussing the economic need for climate action. This includes most major national governments, and global institutions like the World Bank and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UN IPCC). These discussions have been spurred by increasingly dramatic and catastrophic extreme weather events.

Yet even at this point, most authoritative reviews find that current government climate policies and pledges are not sufficient to prevent large-scale social and economic upheaval. There is a persistent gap between where we are heading and the levels of mitigation and adaptation needed to avoid the worst outcomes.^[5]

1. See Stern N., Stiglitz J.E., Taylor C.: [The Social Cost of Carbon, Risk, Distribution, Market Failures: An Alternative Approach](#). National Bureau of Economic Research No. w28472 (2021)
2. Keen S.: [The appallingly bad neoclassical economics of climate change](#) Globalizations 1-29 (2020)
3. Bastien-Olvera B.A., Moore F.C.: [Use and non-use value of nature and the social cost of carbon](#). Nature Sustainability 4 101–108 (2020)
4. Institute for Policy Integrity: [Gauging Economic Consensus on Climate Change](#) (2021)
5. Climate Action Tracker: [Massive gas expansion risks overtaking positive climate policies](#) (2022)

Problem 2: Emissions Regulations should be for Edge Cases, not the Core Transition

The existing policy approaches, being non-systemic, are proving ineffective and incapable of delivering the change that is needed at pace. State controls and subsidies are the first port of call to change the way the system works, but:

- there are too few in place, and they are not extensive or far-reaching enough
- they are too numerous and too complex to create, manage or adapt effectively
- they must be frequently updated as conditions change

Problem 3: Carbon Taxes are Slow and Problematic

Taxes e.g. the UK fuel price escalator may be appealingly simple but:

- they create a weak carbon price signal, being only additions onto the cash price
- they only provide incomplete coverage
- they do not provide an absolute cap
- they are often ineffective, e.g. due to constant oversupply of credits to emissions trading schemes^[1]
- they are subject to easy reversal and loopholes^[2]
- they are politically unrealistic at the required scale. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, governments invoked extraordinary measures to avoid politically damaging high fuel prices.

1. See Ember-Sandbag Report: [An agenda for strategic reform of the ETS. What's the future for EU carbon pricing?](#) (2017)

2. See Lilliestam J., Patt A., Bersalli G.: [The effect of carbon pricing on technological change for full energy decarbonization: A review of empirical ex-post evidence](#) WIREs Climate Change 12, 1 (2020)

Problem 4: The Carbon Markets Desperately Need A Substantial Upgrade

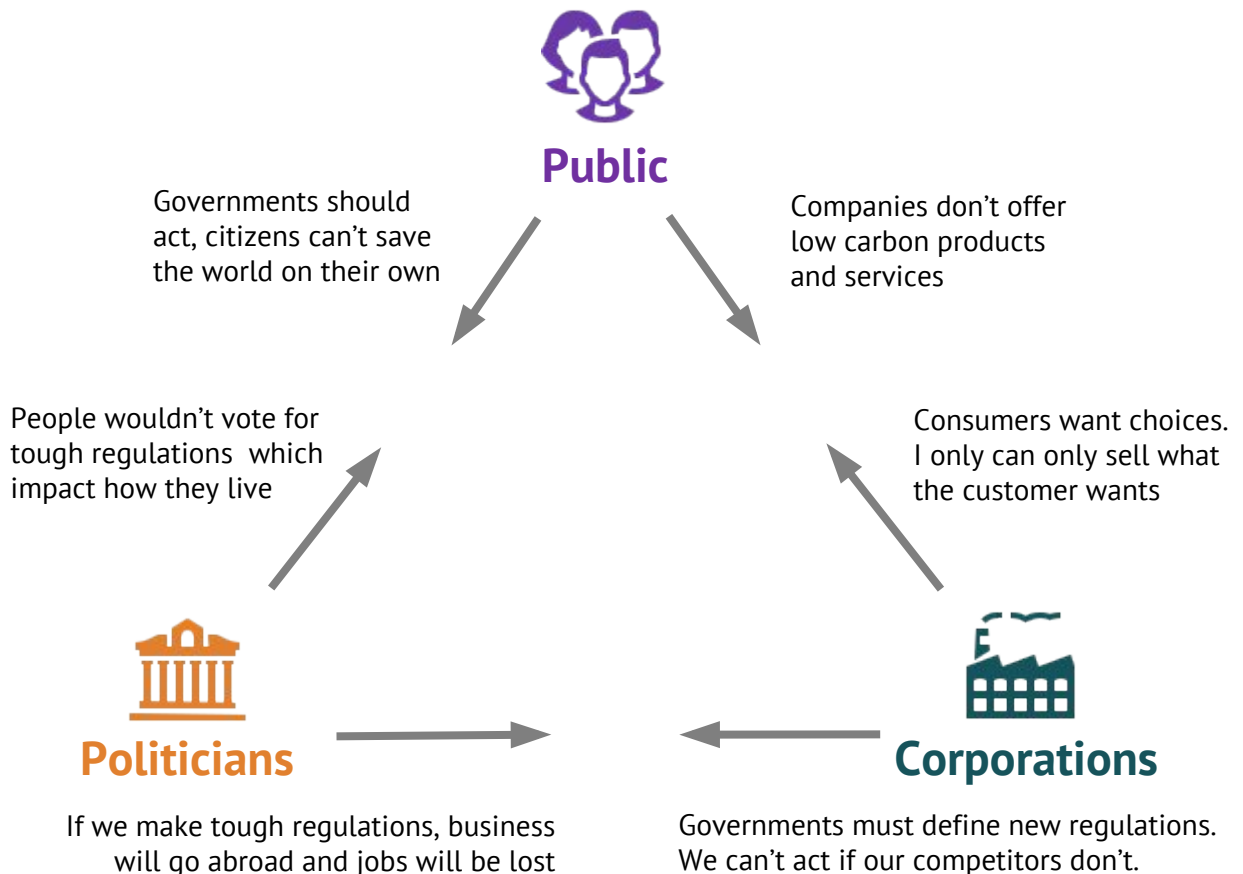
The widely accepted ***Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard***^[1] currently defines scopes 1, 2 & 3 for commercial CO₂ emissions, and typically scope 3 will make up 80% of a company's emissions.

Due to the uniqueness of every company's scope 3 emissions, cataloguing, standardising, verifying and certifying such emissions is a huge task and with low disclosure rates, variable data quality, and poor comparability, the potential for legal dispute around overlap is huge.^{[2][3]}

1. From the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)
2. See Stenzel, A., Waichman, I. [Supply-chain data sharing for scope 3 emissions](#). Nature Portfolio Journal Climate Action 2, 7 (2023)
3. See BNN Bloomberg: [Investors Wrestle With the 'Scope 3 Conundrum'](#)

Problem 5: the Triangle of Responsibility – Overcoming Deadlock

Real and rapid progress to reduce CO₂ emissions is hard, and as a result we take shocking risks^[4] as we alter our global climate. Typically we point the finger at other people, other companies and other nations.



Who will take the hard choices?

- Citizens won't, if they believe individual action is insignificant.
- Corporations won't, if money is the only measure that matters.
- Politicians won't, if they make climate an election issue and lose.

Individual 'high-burner' citizens lack motivation to reduce their carbon footprint. Why make uncomfortable lifestyle changes when there is no immediate benefit, no peer group pressure and in fact, carbon emissions appear to be somebody else's problem?

Plus you can't manage what you can't measure - if you don't know what your carbon footprint is, it's difficult to reduce it.

Businesses voluntarily measure the CO₂ emissions they are responsible for, but using the Scope 3 standard^[2] includes CO₂ emissions over which they have no control and often zero influence. This creates the unrealistic expectation that businesses will solve the issue of how much CO₂ is created by people using their product or services at every point from cradle to grave across their whole supply chain.

1. In the UK government's 2025 national security assessment of global biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, caused in a large part by climate change due to CO₂ emissions, the risk to UK national security and prosperity is rated "high". [UK Government publications repository PDF download](#)
2. All indirect emissions that occur in a company's value chain, i.e. emissions other than those resulting from energy production, e.g. emissions from the extraction and transportation of raw materials, the production of goods and services, and the disposal of products: <https://ghgprotocol.org/corporate-value-chain-scope-3-standard>

While businesses measure their carbon footprints at an organisational level, individual employees, teams and whole departments won't feel the need to be low-carbon.

All these issues also play out on a global scale and, as outlined by the United Nations, those contributing the least to CO₂ emissions around the world are the ones feeling the impacts most heavily. There is little to no fairness or justice evident in the last decade of global climate action beyond a history of unfulfilled promises.

The Carbon Accounts concept offers a way to break the deadlock. Making progress on reducing CO₂ emissions requires everybody to reduce their carbon footprint and for each to see the other doing so: creating accountability in people, business and government. It provides a mix of “all in it together” for the public, the “least worst” option for political leaders, and a strong price signal and stimulus for innovation in business and industry.

Problem 6: Fossil Fuel Industry Does Not Intend to Go Quietly

The fossil fuel industry is locked in a game where the energy transition is a losing move. The big oil corporations supply fuel - a high margin, capital intensive operation. But the world is currently busy electrifying, which cuts out the fuel-based middleman that Big Oil is. The alternative fuel, hydrogen, as a technology is still scaling up slowly and Big Oil involvement is hesitant. Lastly, renewable electricity production, via windfarms and solar, is a low margin, long term business completely unsuited to the fossil fuel business model.

So the industry lobbies hard to keep oil and gas going.

But that is not enough: to keep its future secure, it runs an extensive campaign of deception, deflection, delay and greenwash. It denies the need for rapid, decisive intervention and drowns out the voice for action.^[1]

1. Prof Michael Mann, who formulated what became known as the Hockey Stick graph showing the link between CO₂ in the atmosphere and global temperature, describes the highly effective disinformation campaign run by the oil industry, during which he was and continues to be directly victimised, in his book “The New Climate War”, published 2021.

EcoCounts: 3 Years On

EcoCounts received charitable status in 2021 and has brought together a group of people across Central and North London, covering the boroughs of Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Camden, Westminster and the City.

- Carbon footprints recorded: 25 members in 2023 and 25 in 2024, with our 2026 cohort now recording month by month. Our carbon footprint app, launching later this year, will enable day-by-day recording.

EcoCounts



- Participant retention: 75% across years one and two.
- Group carbon footprint: 30% below the average Londoner – reflecting both the self-selecting nature of the group and the impact of tracking and acting on emissions together. The more important question is how much further members reduce their footprints once they join, which our ongoing recording is designed to capture.
- Complexity of the data: In one case, a member's new EV generated one-off manufacturing emissions equivalent to approximately four times a typical annual footprint – a reminder of why carbon literacy matters.
- Independent review: Our methodology is being reviewed by student research teams from UCL and Imperial College London.
- EcoCounts has received grant funding from the National Lottery and other funders. Our full 2025 impact report is available at ecocounts.community.

For enquiries about the programme, data, or partnership opportunities, contact us at ecocounts.community/contact-us

PART 2: FORGING A SOLUTION

With the Carbon Accounts framework, we can give people agency in tackling the problem; show business what zero emissions customers look like and make them zero emissions customers themselves; and provide evidence to government to put the right policies in the right place.

- The answer has to be acceptable to people right across the political spectrum
- As well as to people, it should apply to all commerce, industry and services in a business-friendly, innovation-driving revolution
- The government must see people and businesses rallying behind it when voting and lobbying

“There can be no silver bullet... but could there be a silver buckshot? Could we assemble a portfolio of approaches that would move us in the right direction...”

– Gwyn Prins and Steve Rayner, climate policy experts and authors of the paper *“The Wrong Trousers: Radically Rethinking Climate Policy”* discussing climate policy after Kyoto

- Starting with Individual Action
- Making Our CO₂ Emissions As Real And Tangible As Money
- Dual Currency of Cash and Carbon
- The Carbon Accounts Framework
- Encompassing Business and Industry
- How A Flight To The Maldives Compares To A Cup Of Tea And What It Means In Carbon Tokens
- How To Buy A Loaf Of Bread with Carbon Currency and Cash
- What Happens When The Baker Gets an Electric Oven?
- What Happens When The Baker Sticks With Fossil Fuels?

Starting with Individual Action

EcoCore's economic climate policy is built on the obvious principle: if we want to stop CO2 levels rising, fossil fuel use must be reduced. If we accept our own agency in this situation, then the responsibility starts with individuals. The question then becomes, how can we persuade government to change the system so that individual effort is impactful?

We are putting EcoCounts into action as a live demonstration of how community-driven carbon reduction can work. By combining our dual-membership model, data tracking, and academic partnerships, we test, refine, and prove what's possible - turning isolated actions into collective impact. With our workshops, carbon footprint recording and participatory governance, we show policymakers how individual efforts can drive systemic change when supported by data, solidarity, and clear pathways for reduction.

10 years ago, no-one tracked how much they were walking each day. Now everyone has a pedometer in their pocket and if someone said “I’ve walked 30,000 steps today”, most people would know they had done a lot. The CO2 emissions issue is in exactly the same place as physical fitness 10 years ago.

EcoCounts is creating an app to provide our members with a level of accuracy about their emissions rarely available outside the realm of professional consultancy. The EcoCounts app brings the same simplicity to carbon – giving members a straightforward tool to log their footprint item by item, see their trends over time, and understand at a glance where their emissions are coming from and how they are changing. **[Mock-up screens of app]**

One of the key factors that motivates people to engage with EcoCounts is that we are more impactful working together. Telling a person to live differently will not work, but show them what their fellow citizens are able to achieve and the message will hit home.

Everyone knows that individual efforts alone won’t solve the climate crisis, but building a culture of personal responsibility for carbon emissions is key to our strategy. It is also a culture that businesses experience through interaction with us and our members as both customers and employees. This enhanced carbon literacy is the driver that the EcoCore Carbon Accounts framework could make possible across the whole economy.

"If someone in the group said they were going to do it, I'd naturally want to do it too."

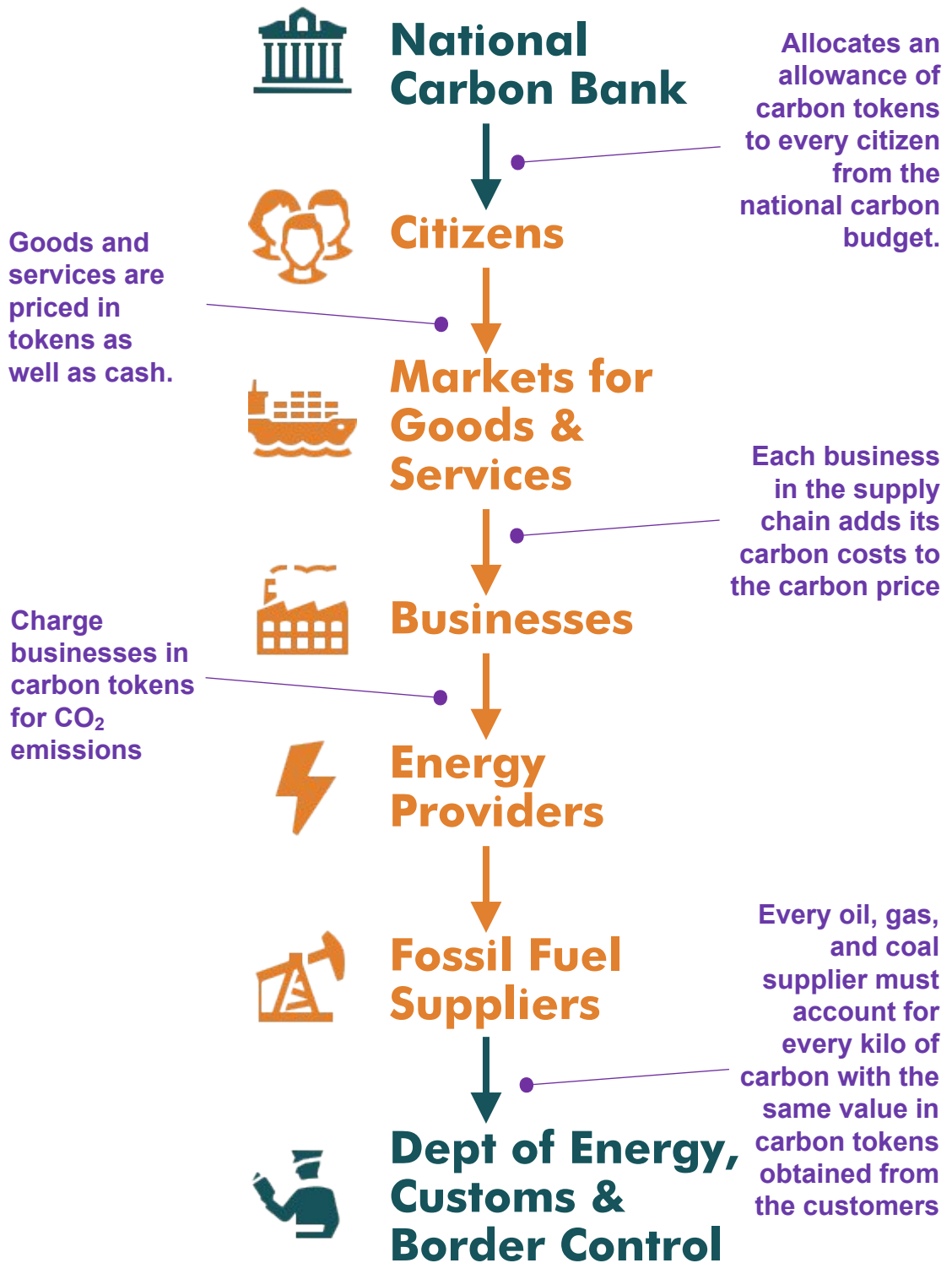
- Robin Clarke, member since 2023, talking about group CO₂ emissions reductions.

Making our CO₂ Emissions Tangible with a National Carbon Allowance

The personal responsibility people learn through EcoCounts—knowing their footprint, managing a carbon budget, and seeing the effects of their choices—shows how a national system can work when responsibility is no longer voluntary, but built into daily life as a social norm.

A national carbon allowance would take the voluntary, self-motivated behaviour demonstrated by groups like EcoCounts and extend it across the whole population, setting a common expectation for everyone. The climate crisis has visibly intensified over the past decade and will continue to worsen, and public concern has grown alongside it. If this trend continues, society may soon reach a point where voters support a government willing to introduce a clear, accountable system for managing CO₂ emissions—and a national allowance could be that mechanism.

We propose a dual-currency system in which every transaction requires both cash and carbon allowance tokens. By design, this approach doesn't stop at influencing individual behaviour; it reshapes how businesses operate, how supply chains are structured, and how trade decisions are made across the economy.



A Dual Currency of Cash and Carbon

In this framework, the government gives carbon tokens, measured in kilos of CO₂, to all citizens on an equal per-capita basis. This gives government direct control over national emissions:

- The number of tokens issued sets national carbon output.
- This creates a strong guarantee that we can meet our climate targets.
- Everyone must pay for goods and services using both cash and carbon tokens.
- Businesses must also pay in tokens when purchasing goods or services but do not receive an allowance. Instead, they must recover their carbon costs by adding a carbon price to everything they sell.
- As products move through the supply chain, the carbon price accumulates, with each vendor passing their token costs on to the next buyer.
- Fossil fuel producers must pay the government in tokens for each kilo of fossil fuel they extract or import. This is the audit point in the system, at which the control over fossil fuel production comes to bear. Producers can only obtain their carbon tokens from their customers by charging for them when selling fossil fuels.

The Carbon Accounts Framework

All individuals and organisations must run their own carbon accounts, tracking how many tokens they spend and earn. If someone spends too many tokens or sells goods too cheaply (not demanding enough carbon tokens), they will face real financial consequences, just as with money.

This binds the entire system together:

- Citizens on one end spending tokens
- Fossil fuel producers on the other end paying tokens to the government
- Business and industry in between, managing their carbon flow as they do with cash

As a result, people and organisations become fully accountable for their own carbon budgets—personally and financially responsible. As individuals learn to manage their carbon tokens, carbon literacy will rise sharply. Employers, in turn, benefit from their employees' growing carbon awareness and prudent behaviour.

Encompassing Business and Industry

Every business must run its own carbon account just as they manage income and expenditure in a set of cash accounts. A business must pay carbon tokens for purchases and would obtain all or most of its carbon tokens from customers via its sales of goods or services.

People, businesses, in fact any organisation may buy or sell carbon tokens freely on the open market like a foreign currency, which results in a fluctuating, real-time, national carbon price, based on the participation of all sectors of the economy.

Fossil fuels are so entrenched in the economy, there is little else incisive enough to make carbon as tangible as money, and nothing as effective as money to drive the energy transition.

How a Flight to the Maldives Compares to a Cup of Tea and What It Means in Carbon Tokens

One carbon token represents one kilo of CO₂.

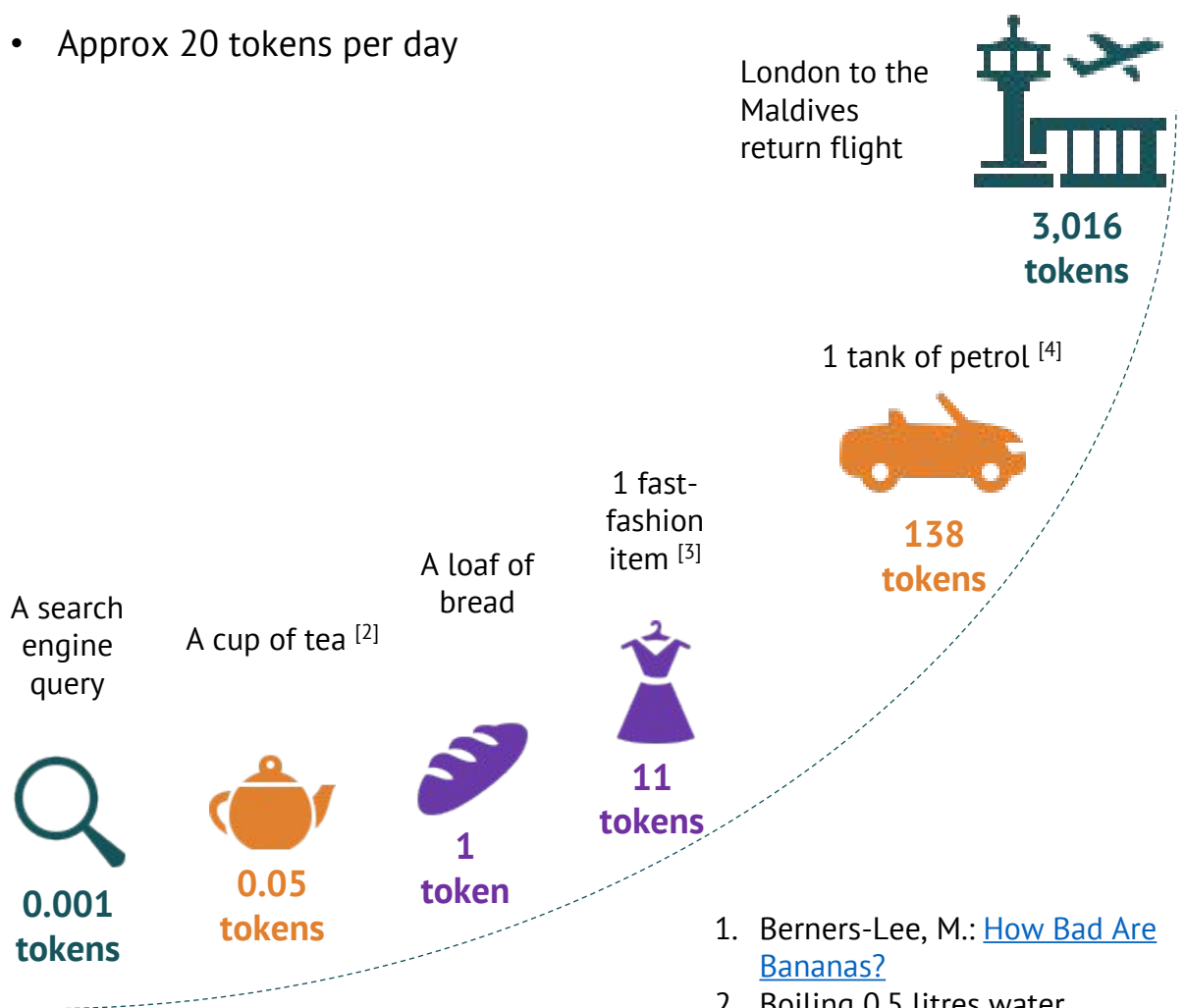
In the UK in 2021 our average carbon footprint, including all greenhouse gases, including shipping, aviation, land-use change and all the built-in emissions in foreign imports, was roughly 10 tonnes of CO₂e per annum.^[1]

When the Carbon Accounts system is introduced, the introductory level of the carbon allowance would presumably be set at a level that is acceptable to general population, to be reduced from that level on a regular basis to target the nation's ultimate climate goal.

1. To try to be accurate, it is possibly more like 9 tonnes CO₂e p.a. but accuracy without accountability in supply chains rarely exists and 10 is a nice round number for our example. Data from [Our World in Data - CO2 and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Data Explorer](#)

Let's take the recent average UK carbon footprint as an example. The state allocation of carbon tokens to its citizens is 10 tonnes, but maybe 25% is kept back for government use for all that government must pay for.

- 10 tonnes CO₂ per person per year
- 7.5 tonnes CO₂ per person after government deductions
- 7,500 tokens per year
- Approx 20 tokens per day



1. Berners-Lee, M.: [How Bad Are Bananas?](#)
2. Boiling 0.5 litres water
3. Trove - [Decarbonising Fashion](#)
4. 1 litre petrol emits 2.3kg CO₂

How to Buy a Loaf of Bread with Carbon Currency and Cash

1. The government restricts fossil fuel supply by giving everyone a carbon allowance in tokens, e.g., 25 kg per week.
2. Every citizen gets this allowance, while companies do not, though they may use tokens.
3. Tokens are like money: “The King promises to allow on demand a fossil fuel company to extract hydrocarbon fuels which when burnt create one kilo of CO₂ for the benefit of the bearer.”
4. To buy a loaf of bread, you pay the baker cash as usual, say £5.
5. You also pay carbon tokens—maybe 1 kg per loaf.
6. The baker charges a carbon price, but it is not state-controlled.
7. Consider the baker’s oven: burning gas produces CO₂. The baker pays the gas supplier with cash and tokens.
8. The baker sets the carbon price to manage costs, purchases, and production alongside cash.
9. This system applies across every wholesaler and retailer, reflecting carbon costs at every step.

What happens when the Baker gets an Electric Oven?

The first benefit is that the baker no longer has to pay lots of carbon tokens (or cash) for the fossil gas.

The baker at this point would presumably choose an electricity provider who provides zero carbon energy and demands zero carbon tokens in payment. Electricity providers who generate energy from fossil fuel power stations will have to charge carbon tokens for their energy, so the baker is obviously going to seek out an electricity provider who generates wind, solar, geothermal, nuclear or some other clean energy.

What happens when the Baker Sticks with Fossil Fuels?

The baker pays the gas supplier with cash as before and with carbon tokens.

The gas supplier is the gas pipeline network operator who sells gas to all domestic and business consumers, often storing the gas in gas holders and at the end of the day, purchasing it from the original fossil fuel producers, paying in cash and carbon tokens.

The fossil fuel extractor has to collect carbon tokens on all the fossil fuel it sells, because it has to surrender carbon tokens to the government to match the amount of carbon it has dug or pumped out of the ground or imported. This is the focus of state control in the system.

This system covers the whole economy. The baker will have other reasons to spend carbon tokens. The production of flour, water, waste water, central heating for the bakery, delivery vans and everything else will initially be fueled by fossil fuels and cost carbon tokens to buy.

**PART 3:
MAKING IT
HAPPEN**

“Do not wait to strike till the iron is hot; but make it hot by striking.”

– William Butler Yeats

- EcoCounts: Trailblazing Sustainable Change
- The EcoCounts Group and Blueprint
- EcoCore and EcoCounts Roadmap
- Reframing the Narrative
- Society
- Designing Climate Policy Rules that are Hard to Break
- Government
- People and Carbon Trading
- Business
- Carbon Markets
- Why We Know It's Possible to Make these Changes

EcoCounts: Trailblazing Sustainable Change

EcoCounts is based in London and is bringing together a group of people along with all the personal, community and technical support needed for participants to get to grips with reducing their CO₂ emissions. This is a blueprint with scaling-up in mind.

But is this focus on individual responsibility a blinkered approach that ignores the scale of the crisis? Not if it is the keystone of the whole EcoCore proposal designed to impact society and the economy's CO₂ emissions at every level.

The emphasis is to reach out to and include people on lower incomes who are more likely to be impacted by the climate crisis, while leveraging more environmentally active people's expertise and lived experience to benefit the group.

This mix of participants creates a strengths-based approach, using citizens assembly-based decision-making to steer future development of the technology, and enhance participant support and commitment.

Effective social change must have two principal lines of action^[1]: grassroots projects independent of government, and a mass movement to change government policies and the practices of business and industry. EcoCounts puts the flesh on the bones of the EcoCore concept. When society finally offers the opportunity for transformational change, the grassroots support and the socio-economic thinking must be in place already.

“Governments are quick to act in self-interest and slow to act in response to reasoned argument in the public interest, unless it is supported by a large number of citizens who could possibly remove that government from office.”

- Mark Diesendorf, Rod Taylor: *“The Path to a Sustainable Civilisation”*^[1]

1. See: Diesendorf M. & Taylor R.: [The Path to a Sustainable Civilisation](#) pp 269-270 Palgrave Macmillan (2023)

The EcoCounts Group and Blueprint

The key parts of our blueprint are:

- Personal carbon accounts: members record their actual day-to-day carbon emissions, fostering awareness and accountability
- Carbon footprint app: simplifies recording and learning
- Community collaboration: participatory decision-making guides development of the EcoCounts program
- Dual-membership approach: unites high and low emitters, offering support, shared goals, and fair, judgement-free carbon reduction through collective action, combining expertise from environmentally active individuals and the lived experiences of those on lower incomes
- Partnerships with local businesses and councils: EcoCounts collaborates to create carbon labels, low-carbon services and an interface to corporate carbon emissions reporting

By combining individual action, community support, and systemic change, EcoCounts provides a blueprint for reducing CO₂ emissions effectively and equitably.

Our Theory of Change

The Cost of Replication

Our Financial Position

Current annual operating budget: £30K

Filed accounts can be [downloaded here](#).

Budget Breakdown

As a rough indicator of the cost of replication, we believe the whole EcoCounts blueprint could be deployed anywhere. Running an EcoCounts group costs approximately £750 per participant per year – covering programme coordination, carbon tracking tools, community support, and data management for a group of 100 participants. For a full budget breakdown, see our publicly available projection. **[LINK]**

EcoCore & EcoCounts Roadmap

[Roadmap / timeline Graphic, page 35 of old manifesto]

We create an EcoCounts blueprint to set up more groups around the country with the same strategy and infrastructure

Reframing the Narrative

For a nation to be willing to adopt a policy like the Carbon Accounts concept, a major shift in voters' thinking is required, inspired by a strong positive narrative. These sticking points in the public mind must be answered to foster real, rapid progress:

- the sense of unfairness and injustice in the current system
- the perceived personal effort of action in everyday life
- a sense of futility that personal action would make any difference

And these barriers to progress must be tackled:

- short-term thinking, especially in politics and government
- the presence of strong opposing and distracting voices from outside our communities
- the triangle of inertia, as citizens, business and government wait for the others to move first

The EcoCore concept tackles most of these issues head-on. We aim to create a public narrative around our idea, with stories based on the lived experiences from EcoCounts participants as the group grows and multiplies.

In combination with the proliferating news headlines showing extreme weather impacting ordinary people, we believe there is now an opportunity for the message to be heard.

We are drawing together writers, communications experts, designers, film-makers and social media experts to collaborate on this. We are reaching out to like-minded NGOs to build a movement that puts the concepts of citizen responsibility, carbon allowances, fairness and business innovation firmly on the table.

Society

We know the wealthiest in society have disproportionately large CO₂ emissions.^[1] These ‘high burners’ will need to buy carbon tokens. This creates a flow of income to those less able to afford the measures to cope with increasing climate impacts.^[2]

The buying and selling of tokens brings greater social cohesion in times of increasing crisis as the flow of income from high emitting, high income citizens to lower income, lower emissions citizens creates a form of basic income for those with low emissions.

Equitable distribution of tokens fosters a sense of ‘all being in the same boat’, becoming a social norm at a time of worsening climate change-induced socio-economic impacts.

1. Oxfam International - [Report: Extreme Carbon Inequality](#) (2015)
2. Parag Y. and Fawcett T.: [Personal carbon trading: a review of research evidence and real-world experience of a radical idea](#). Energy and Emission Control Technologies 2:23-32 (2014)

Designing Climate Policy Rules that are Hard to Break

Carbon taxes have only been implemented at levels that result in small CO₂ reductions compared to what is needed. The same is true for large cap-and-trade schemes like the EU ETS.

Fossil fuel producers are the primary source of CO₂ emissions. Effective pollution regulations must target them directly.

The success of the US Acid Rain SO₂ “Cap and Trade” program reflects this, targeting coal-fired power stations, the sole source of SO₂. The same applies in the case of the US Clean Air Act, and the Montreal Protocol CFC phase-out.

In the Carbon Accounts system, carbon tokens flow from citizens through the supply chain to the original fossil fuel producers, who must match tokens to production quantities. Policing this matching process in the oil, coal, and gas industries ensures the emissions reduction.

- See Giles C.: [Next Generation Compliance: Environmental Regulation for the Modern Era](#) Oxford University Press, NY (2020)

Government

The permitted quantity of the fossil fuels is handed out as carbon tokens and is defined by the nation's overall climate goals

Restricting supply is the most impactful approach to reducing fossil fuel use in the economy. It prevents the infamous “rebound effect” from energy savings. It pushes energy demand towards renewables, or cancels it

The independent, mechanistic carbon price setting by vendors of products and services is dynamic and responsive, and does not require a centralised carbon price database. This leads to faster decarbonisation across the economy.

Coverage includes the public sector, foreign imports, hard-to-abate industries, and other greenhouse gases such as methane.

To be effective, the fossil fuel supply cap must be set by an independent public authority capable of resisting political pressure and lobbying efforts/

Checks and balances and details of implementation must be a result of participative democracy to ensure public acceptance.

“The Carbon Accounts framework should replace attempts to set an artificial carbon price. We roughly know the quantity for various global warming scenarios. Setting the quantity per capita & issuing that could be a lot more effective than trying to guess the “right” price for carbon.”

- Prof. Steve Keen, UCL

People and Carbon Trading

Citizens receive their personal allowance of tokens at the start of every allowance period and must ensure it suffices - but businesses receive no allowance. They are required to charge their customers for payment in carbon tokens as well as cash, in order to pay their suppliers in carbon tokens for all they purchase.

£4.3 billion

In 2022, the UK was paying £100 per tonne of CO₂ on the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. In total, business paid £4.3 billion for 43 million tonnes of hard-to-abate industrial emissions.

- Statista, Ember: [UK-ETS carbon pricing](#) (2023)

Every business would need to run a carbon budget in its own carbon account.

As Carbon Accounts become a feature in the personal lives of every business's innovators, they would bring their domestic learning and experiences to work with them. Increasing knowledge of complexities surrounding CO₂ emissions in the economy within business, like any relevant knowledge, should have profound effects upon business innovation and technological advances.

CO₂ emissions would be paid for at every step of the supply chain, raising its visibility and creating a new double bottom line of cash and carbon.

Large organisations such as the UK NHS would deal with CO₂ emissions at the lowest level within their organisation's budgetary hierarchy rather than creating large scale estimates of emissions and generalised decarbonisation plans. Employees' greater carbon literacy and carbon prudence would stimulate more innovative and targeted decision-making at these lower levels.

UK CO₂ emissions of 700 Megatonnes in 2020 can be used to set the first annual carbon budget under this plan - a realistic starting point for the introduction. This creates a total carbon token supply of 700 million tonnes in the first year, worth - at a carbon price of £100/tonne - £70 billion.

- Defra UK: [Measuring UK greenhouse gas emissions](#) (2021)

Business

Currently companies in a supply chain run annual or even less frequent carbon audits. Improvements in their carbon footprint and changes in the price are only passed on after the next audit, setting a slow annual pace for innovation, inventiveness and the whole energy transition.

Using the Carbon Accounts system, businesses will have to buy everything with carbon tokens and will quickly see where all their carbon tokens are spent, regardless of how long or complex their supply chains are.

Carbon price of any product or service is added to incrementally at every step along the supply chain as businesses or traders add their own CO₂ emissions to the total. The carbon cost of any item is cumulative and builds up along the supply chain, added to by each step in a mechanistic process. This carbon cost becomes the amount of tokens on the price label.

Companies will compete with carbon price reductions, as more zero carbon options become available for doing whatever they do to add value to their products.

Large organisations can adapt at the lowest level of their hierarchy, where every financial decision-maker also becomes a carbon decision-maker, bringing their home-grown carbon literacy to work with them. Decarbonising the organisation no longer requires annual carbon footprinting exercises and top-level directives.

All this will fuel extensive adaptation, innovation and technological advances.^[1]

The introduction of rigorous carbon accounting through this new set of rules enables real-time thinking about the emissions of every business decision throughout all levels of leadership at a company. It offers a clear and direct way to make faster and more effective lower carbon investment and finance decisions, from research and development through to supply chains and strategic planning.

1. du Plessis M.: [The role of knowledge management in innovation](#) Journal of Knowledge Management 11.4 20-29 (2007)

Carbon Markets

Rather than carbon drawdown projects selling carbon credits directly to organisations wanting to offset in-house CO₂ emissions, the Carbon Accounts system funds projects which earn carbon tokens directly from the central carbon bank for proven, robust carbon sequestration. Organisations do not offset emissions - they only work with carbon tokens and compete to decarbonise.

The carbon bank becomes the central point where all risk, quality evaluation and pricing for carbon drawdown projects occurs. This revolutionises the carbon markets, centralising the regulatory framework, reducing the complexity and boosting transparency.

Why We Know It's Possible to Make these Changes

The introduction of a national carbon allowance would not be totally unprecedented. Equivalent economy-wide shifts include...

- 1971 The UK decimalised its currency and dropped the shilling.
- 1973 The UK introduced Value Added Tax on everything.
- 1978 The UK started mandating metric measurements.
- 1990 The sovereign nations of East and West Germany reunified, completely replacing the Ost Mark with the Deutsche Mark.
- 1999 Germany & 10 other nations to introduce the Euro.
- 2008 The UK government estimated the costs of a introducing a “citizens’ carbon card” at £2 billion set-up and £1 billion annual running costs. Since then, progress in digital technology has generally made technology platforms greatly more advanced and less expensive.

Incisive economic policy to control fossil fuel supply is not just possible, it would enable everyone to live better lives and do better business in an equitable, practical and efficient way.

Summary

The magnitude of the social and economic changes that EcoCore is proposing are considerable. But so are the dangers that come with uncontrolled use of fossil fuels.

Society cannot pick and choose its future: we must bear every eventuality in mind, including the worst case scenarios. Science offers many potential scenarios, but the truth is that we don't have the computing power available to rule out several of the most concerning theories. We are effectively playing a civilisation-scale version of Russian roulette.

Even if it is difficult to grasp the risks that society is exposing itself to, the bottom line is that new, challenging, scalable and equitable policies like the EcoCore framework have to be examined and developed without delay. From the small and local with EcoCounts to the global and ambitious with a global carbon currency, society must take every chance that presents itself to steer a course to a world where humanity can thrive.

What You Can Do To Help

Households - sign up to EcoCounts, follow what we do, get involved online, determine your everyday CO₂ emissions

Organisations - get in touch and help EcoCounts to change the way your organisation accounts for its CO₂ emissions to include the actual carbon footprint of your products, as well as your organisation-level scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

Municipality or Government - work with us to create strategies for your citizens and businesses to realise and benefit from this real, tangible carbon economy

Additional Information

EcoCore Carbon Accounts Policy Definition

A national CO₂e emissions cap reflecting national climate targets is implemented as a carbon tokens-based currency given to citizens on an equal per capita basis as a regular but decreasing allowance.

These tokens are spent in the purchase of all goods and services in the economy alongside cash. All vendors must demand a token price on the sale of their goods and services, to balance their organisation's carbon account, with the same prudence as for money. Organisations must in turn pay the token price on all purchases.

At the start of every supply chain, fossil fuel producers extract gas, oil or coal and demand carbon tokens on its sale in addition to the cash price. This point of control is where fossil fuel producers surrender their carbon tokens to the state, as a measure of and license for what they have extracted. Hence all organisations in the supply chain from fossil fuel company to citizen add incrementally to the carbon token price with every transaction as the products or services are developed and passed down the line from business to business.

All are allowed to participate, businesses, citizens and state, in trading of wanted or unwanted tokens for cash, which creates the national carbon price. Overall this creates a robust, transparent carbon accounting framework for business.

Carbon drawdown is rewarded centrally from the national carbon token supply from the token supply pool for citizens, replacing all carbon credit markets. Voluntary and mandatory carbon accounting by organisations are replaced by carbon accounts based on income and expenditure of carbon tokens.

Image Credits

One can see from space how the human race has changed the Earth. Nearly all of the available land has been cleared of forest and is now used for agriculture or urban development. The polar ice caps are shrinking and the desert areas are increasing. At night, the Earth is no longer dark, but large areas are lit up. All of this is evidence that human exploitation of the planet is reaching a critical limit. But human demands and expectations are ever-increasing. We cannot continue to pollute the atmosphere, poison the ocean and exhaust the land. There isn't any more available.

Stephen Hawking, Physicist & Author, 2007 (11th Hour interview)

Our Volunteers

Over the last 3 years, EcoCore has built up a debt of gratitude to all of the following volunteers, without whom none of this would exist:

Behind the Manifesto

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Organisational Structure

EcoCore is a community interest company based in London,
registered in the UK #13707292, which focuses advocacy and
research on cross-cutting environmental challenges with pragmatism
and objectivity.

Website: <https://ecocore.org>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ecocore/>

EcoCounts CIO is a charity registered in the UK #1196590. We
promote grassroots climate action and a just transition through
principles of personal and group responsibility for CO₂ emissions.

Website: <https://ecocounts.community>

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