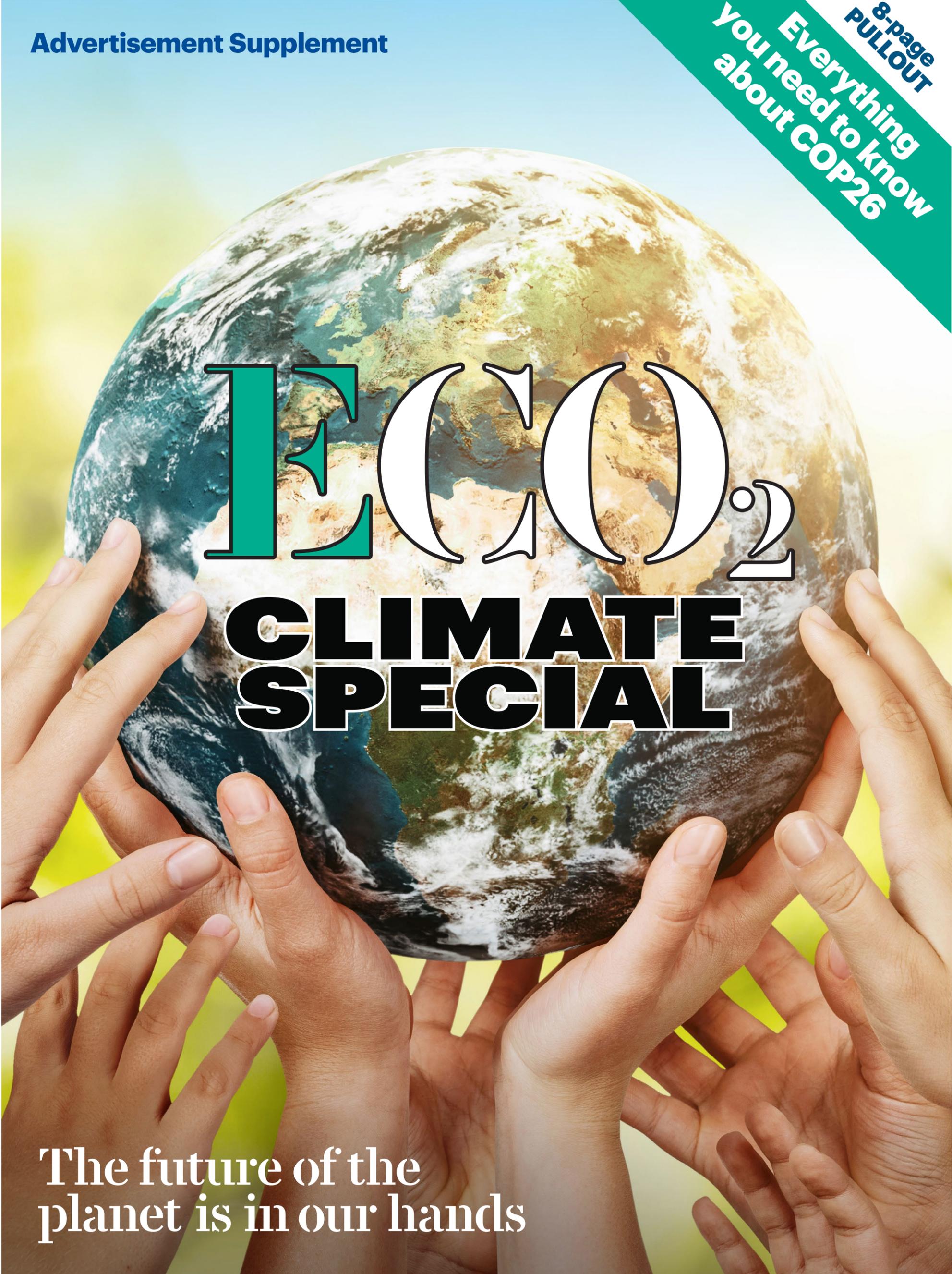


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PULLOUT
Everything
you need to know
about COP26



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CLIMATE SPECIAL

The future of the
planet is in our hands

What on Earth is COP26?

Next month, delegates from 197 countries will come together in Glasgow to discuss the climate emergency and to pledge to take steps to slow the pace of global warming

By **Lucy Siegle**
ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALIST

IN JUST a few weeks time, a giant travelling climate summit called the Conference of the Parties – COP – will descend on the banks of the Clyde. Glasgow will pay host to almost 200 world leaders, their negotiating teams, eco-concerned citizens from all walks of life, dignitaries and businesses in what has been described as cross between an Olympics for the Earth and a game of planetary poker.

Why should we care?

COP26 is being called the most important meeting ever. We know beyond doubt that human activity has caused the climate to change, in some cases irreversibly. We're turning a once friendly home – our planet – into a hostile environment, not just for us but for all living creatures. In July, the United Nations called the state of the world a 'code red' for humanity. Unless we sort this out, the death and destruction caused by climate change will become normalised. COP26 represents our best chance – some would say our only chance – of reversing out of this crisis. The decisions being made at COP26 will affect the future of your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and whether they get a chance to make a good life in decades to come.

What's happening at COP26?

COP26 has one real job: to stop the climate nightmare becoming a reality. One of the key jobs is for countries to submit their 'homework': they have to publish figures that tell the COP how much they pledge to cut their emissions by 2030. The boffins then work out whether this is enough to



Big names: Singer Ellie Goulding, above, and Sir David Attenborough, opposite page, are expected to attend COP26

secure the goal of COP26: to ensure that Earth does not become any hotter than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels (the levels in the 1800s before we started frantically burning coal to power machinery).

During the second week, things will start to get tense, as people try to befriend those who have access to the Measurement, Reporting and Verification room, which is the unlikely name for a hotbed of intrigue.

This is where the main political battle will take place: a game of poker at which delegates try to read whether the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitters will be persuaded to stop opening new coal-fired power stations. To read the

The movers and shakers...

Glasgow will soon be buzzing with dignitaries and politicians – but this is not your standard conference in a Novotel with PowerPoints and watery coffee.

For a start, Sir David Attenborough is rumoured to be giving the opening speech on the first day.

The conference is divided into two main zones: the blue zone is for politicians, dignitaries and negotiators; the green zone is for citizens, businesses, schoolchildren and campaigning organisations.

Look out for climate-aware celebrities acting as official advocates for COP26. These include singer and UN environment ambassador Ellie Goulding, K-Pop band Blackpink, primatologist Jane Goodall, and Lewis Pugh, the swimmer who recently swam through

the Arctic ice to raise awareness of the climate crisis. Meanwhile, everyone is hoping Greta Thunberg, below, will make an appearance either in person or online.

One of the rules of the COP is that all states must be represented. As that means every nation on Earth, you'd hope to see a wonderful array of people from around the globe including, for example, representatives from indigenous communities in the Amazon, who protect native forests and vital ecosystems on behalf of us all.

There will be billionaires (they have the highest carbon footprints, so, arguably, should come up with big promises on how to scale back their emissions) and representatives from some of the most vulnerable – the poor who live

on the frontline of climate change. And, finally, plenty of scientists, using lots of climate jargon.

Some will have travelled thousands of miles – yes, by plane; there is always an irony to these meetings – but because of Covid and a lack of vaccinations in the global south, some delegates will have to join in virtually.

COP26 is being called the most important meeting ever

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If every household in Britain got a smart meter, the CO₂* savings Britain could make would be equivalent to the savings made by roughly 70 million trees.

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*Total CO₂ saving between 2013-2034 based on official Gov. forecast for smart meter rollout, 2019. Eligibility may vary. Consumer action required. ALBERT EINSTEIN rights licensed by The H.U.J./Greenlight.

signals, experienced delegates say you need an acute political nose and excellent contacts for gossip. Everyone will be watching the negotiating spaces as envoys shuttle back and forth. Our lives will be in their hands.

What will COP26 achieve?

Many experts think that we have missed this temperature window, and that magic number of 1.5°C will be surpassed.

But don't despair. In 2015, the COP delegates signed an agreement to aim to limit global

warming to well under 2°C (the Paris Agreement). This must happen. Conditions worsen with every fraction of a degree of temperature rise; the vital message of COP26 is that any small reduction is worth fighting for.

One big focus of COP26 is to get us away from using fossil fuels, which are dirty, risky and cause ill health as well as climate change. We need to move to more sustainable ways of growing food and getting about, and creating things by using renewable energy.

Many see this as an excellent opportunity to come up with much smarter systems rather than living with those that we inherited before Victorian times.

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Why international travel can be a force for good

By **Juliet Kinsman**
SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL SPECIALIST

CALL me controversial, but I don't believe banning international holidays is an effective solution to the world's climate problems. In fact, I think 'flight-shaming', curtailing our wanderlust and clipping our wings will only make things worse for many.

It is an undisputed fact that by setting foot on a plane, we are boosting our personal carbon footprint through supporting a form of transport that burns fossil fuels by the ton. But aviation is disproportionately demonised when it comes to emissions. Aeroplanes are responsible for just over two per cent of all human-created emissions, and flying makes up around 12 per cent of all transport emissions – a drop in the ocean compared to the 74 per cent that comes from road-based transport.

We have a long way to go until we can genuinely fly cleaner and greener, but if aviation was a country, it would be ranked right down at 20th in the offender ranks. Take a look at the emissions being spewed out of the construction and agricultural sectors before wagging your finger.

Travel better

The key to sustainable travel as the world opens up is travelling better, and that means planning a holiday that can have a significant positive impact. It's not difficult. You just have to be a little more conscious of how much of your hard-earned holiday money goes directly into the pockets of the communities and cultures that need it the most.

That's because international travel is vital to many underprivileged communities in a world where one in 10 people are employed in tourism. It is vital revenue that can transform lives. Entire communities in Asia, Africa and the Americas rely on our holiday spending. In fact, for many parts of the world, tourism is a form of global wealth distribution, which unlocks education, healthcare and improves infrastructure. It lifts millions out of poverty, making them less vulnerable to the environmental and political struggles we feel powerless to fix.

For instance, Madagascar might be best known for its cute lemurs, but right now the southern part of this island off the east coast of Africa is suffering from drought and famine. This has been made worse by the recent fall in tourism.

The rainforest-rich island has one of

Tourism is a form of global wealth distribution which unlocks education



the highest levels of biodiversity anywhere in the world, with hundreds of thousands of species, but its these are under severe threat from the effects of climate change and deforestation. One of the best ways you can help? By booking a holiday there.

I urge you to think beyond that bargain-basement package holiday to a foreign-owned chain hotel most likely kitted out in made-in-China furniture and which relies on cheap foreign workers and imported ingredients.

Far better to spend your vitally important tourism money at an independently owned, community-linked 'agriturismo' which employs locals of all ages and abilities with a deliciously-low food-print and zero-waste ways.

That's the route to enriching experiences that feel more nutritious for the soul, and which leave sweeter-tasting memories.

For easy-to-follow eco-friendly travel tips, see *The Green Edit: Travel* (£9.99 Ebury Press).

COP26: How to get involved

DESPITE having one of the most ambitious climate targets in the world, the UK has low public interest around events such as COP26. This is shocking and shameful, and there's absolutely no reason not to get involved. While the COP26 summit is going on, keep up to date every day on TV, radio and online.

In the run up to COP26, throughout the conference and afterwards, we can all do our bit to effect change by keeping the pressure on the decision-makers.

Sign up to one of the many fantastic earth charities that work hard to amplify your voice to government such as:

- [wwf.org](https://www.wwf.org)
- [friendsoftheearth.uk](https://www.friendsoftheearth.uk)
- [Surfers Against Sewage, sas.org.uk](https://www.surfersagainstsewage.org)
- [firedrillfridays.com](https://www.firedrillfridays.com)

You can also learn more by reading books such as *How to Save Our Planet*, by Professor Mark Maslin, or *No Planet B*, by Professor Mike Berners-Lee.

And there's still time to

get up to speed with a carbon literacy course and learn everything you need to know about the climate and nature crisis at carbonliteracy.com.

Go to together-for-our-planet.ukcop26.org for ideas and advice on joining the #racetozero.

You'll find more information about the conference at ukcop26.org, or go to onestepgreener.com for loads of pledges and tips on how to become greener.

LUCY SIEGLE

WHAT DO YOU SEE?



When you look at that tiny blue marble,
what do you see?

We see lakes, forests, deserts and oceans.

We see flocks, herds, prides and packs.

We see creatures big and small.

We see 7 billion birthdays.

We see autumn leaves and summer nights.

We see old friends and new beginnings.

We see every first day of school,

every wedding anniversary,

every piece of art painted,

every song and story written,

every dreamer and believer ever.

We see hope.

We see change.

We see home.

And we've all got the opportunity to save it.

Let's look after what we love.

Let's Go Zero.

Q Sky Go Zero

sky0

Net zero carbon by 2030

Believe in better